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**PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
IN THE UPANISADS**

Philosophy of Education in the Upanisads

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DEDICATED

*to the memory of my parents
Late Chandra Kanta Vidyalkar
and
Late Tarapriya Devi*

Om

*Bhadraṁ Karṇebhiḥ Śṇuyāma Devāḥ
Bhadram Paśyemākṣabhir Yajatrāḥ
Sthirair Angaiḥ Tuṣṭuvāmsas Tanūbhiḥ
Vyaśema Devahitam Yad Āyuh*

—*Praśnopaniṣad*

May we, o adorable ones, here with
our ears what is auspicious,
May we efficient to worship, see
with our eyes what is auspicious,
May we who sing your praise,
enjoy the span of life allotted to
us in perfect health and strength.

FOREWORD

It is a pleasure that I have been asked by the author to write a foreword to this work. I have been highly impressed by the work which bespeaks the author's great industry and deep scholarship. His intellectual acumen and grasp of educational problems as revealed in the Upaniṣads are noteworthy. His capacity for critical assessment and the power of presentation are extensive. He has studied the classics, viz. the Upaniṣads with critical insight.

The work is divided into fifteen chapters and in each of them the author has given a critical evaluation of the aspects concerned. The work is an original contribution to the field of educational research. The present day student of education ought to be thankful to the author for the study of the philosophy of education in the light of some Indian thoughts of the past. His treatment is thorough and his style of writing will not fail to cause the interest of the readers.

The author's treatment is original and language perspicuous and the account coherent. The work can be ranked as an intellectual treat.

(Dr H K Baruah)
Vice-Chancellor
Gauhati University

P R E F A C E

The present work was submitted as a thesis under the title '*Education in the Upaniṣads*' for the Ph D degree of the Gauhati University and was approved by it in 1976

In this work an attempt has been made to collect the materials on education in all its facets as revealed in the *Upaniṣads* and to arrange and discuss them systematically under appropriate heads. The materials are gathered mainly from the most authentic and recognised *Upaniṣads* which are ten in number. Due attention has been paid to make the study objective as far as possible and the method followed is descriptive. The scope of the study is limited to the different facets of education and the ideas and ideals of education as recorded in the *Upaniṣads*.

Thus the object of this work is to furnish an account of the *Upaniṣadic* principles of education by analysing and systematising them. The work has been divided into fifteen chapters, each chapter dealing with a particular aspect and comprising several sections.

There are several books on Educational system of Ancient India by many savants like F. E. Keay, Dr. A. S. Altekar, Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee, S. V. Venkatesvara S. R. Das who are the pioneers in this particular branch of Indology. Their works are quite comprehensive and cover almost all the periods of the ancient history of India so far as education is concerned. Education as revealed in all its available aspects in the *Upaniṣads* alone has not been exhaustively and exclusively dealt with by any scholar. Therefore I feel that there is sufficient scope for the present work which is absolutely limited to the *Upaniṣadic* period of Ancient Indian History and Culture.

The work has been delayed and it is with great difficulty that I had to finish it for I am shouldering the onerous responsibilities of organising a University Library and the

Teaching Department of Library Science newly instituted in the University since 1966.

The author begs to acknowledge his heart-felt deep gratitude to Dr. Jogiraj Basu, M.A. (Triple) Ph. D. Ex-Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University for his unstinted help and invaluable guidance from start to finish. I am overwhelmingly grateful to him who just awakened in me real interest in the work. Without his help, advice and supervision the work would I am sure, never have come to a completion. It is unfortunate that he has not lived to see the work coming into the light of day.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Sri B.C. Kar, Ex-professor and Head of the Department of Education for his keen interest in my work and also for his help and generous suggestions.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my thanks to Dr. Mukunda Madhab Sarma, the present Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University whose constant encouragement also acted as an incentive to complete the work. I must take occasion to express my sense of gratitude to Dr. M. Neog, Jawaharlal Nehru Professor of Assamese, Gauhati University, to Dr. P. D. Goswami, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Gauhati University and to my brother Sri Bisweswar Sarma, B.L. Advocate, Assam High Court, for their encouragement and inspiration that never failed me in times of stress, and did a lot to retain my spirit from running down.

I have also to record my gratitude to those who made it possible for me to press it into print and present it before the readers. My sincerest thanks are due to Sri Inderjeet Sharma, proprietor of the firm of Messrs, Oriental Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, who has undertaken to publish this work, notwithstanding the doubtful profit

Thanks are also due to the able printer S. Surinder Singh Sethi of Rima Printing Press who has taken sufficient care to make the book as much free from faults as possible. But in spite of this some error might have crept in, since the book had

to be hurried through a press otherwise heavily engaged. I hope my learned readers will excuse me for this.

I have also to thank my friend Sri Kashav Mahanta, M.A., Publication Officer, Gauhati University for the pains he took in reading the proofs. My sincerest thanks are also due to Sri N. Sarma, M.A., Lecturer, Department of Library Science, Gauhati University who took up the task of preparing the index.

In preparing this work I have used the works of many authors mentioned in the body of the book to all of whom I make grateful and due acknowledgement.

Now it remains for me to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. H. K. Baruah M. Sc, (Cal), Ph. D. (Cantab), F.N.A. Sc, Vice-Chancellor, Gauhati University for the foreword he has so kindly contributed to the book.

J. Sarmah.

2nd January, 1978.

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List of Abbreviations

A.U.	...	<i>Aitareya Upaniṣad</i>
B.U.	...	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i>
C.U.	...	<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i>
Īśa	...	<i>Īśa Upaniṣad</i>
Jābāla	...	<i>Jābāla Upaniṣad</i>
Kena	...	<i>Kena Upaniṣad</i>
Kaṭha	...	<i>Kaṭha Upaniṣad</i>
K.U.	...	<i>Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad</i>
Maitrī	...	<i>Maitrī Upaniṣad</i>
Ma. U.	...	<i>Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad</i>
M.U.	...	<i>Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad</i>
Pañigala	...	<i>Pañigala Upaniṣad</i>
Praśna	...	<i>Praśna Upaniṣad</i>
Śa Bra	...	<i>Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa</i>
S.U.	...	<i>Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad</i>
T.U.	...	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad</i>

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

Vowels	a ā i ī u ū ṛ ṝ e ai o au
-anusvara	ṁ
visarga	ḥ
Consonants	
gutturals	k kh g gh ṅ
palatals	c ch j jh ṇ
Cerebrals	ṭ ṭh ḍ ḍh ṇ
dentals	t th d dh n
labials	p ph b bh m
Semi vowels	Y r l v
sibilants	s (as in sun)
	ś (palatal sibilant pronounced like soft s as in (assure)
	ṣ cerebral sibilant as in (shone)
-aspirate	h

Introduction

The *Upaniṣads* form an integral part of the *Vedas*, the earliest record of Indian culture and civilization. The term *Veda*¹ is derived from the root *Vid* to know and means knowledge i.e. *Divine knowledge*. This knowledge was visualised by the ancient *Rṣis* of India as the result of their austere penances. It is this revealed knowledge which guides us in every sphere of our social and cultural life. This knowledge has been used as a synonym of *Brahman* which is the source of all life, light and bliss from which this universe has been manifested, and this knowledge par excellence has been handed down from generation to generation by the verbal transmission to be compiled only about 1500 B.C.², and hence the *Veda* has attained the appellation of *sruti* or 'the rhythm of the infinite heard by the soul'.

The *Vedic* literature may be broadly divided into three main divisions viz (1) the *karma kanda* or the ritualistic section, (2) the *Upasana kanda* or worship section and (3) the *Jñana kanda* or knowledge section. The first two forming

- 1 The word '*Veda*' has for its origin the Aryan root *Vid* which means seeing. It is seeing with mind's eye or intuitive seeing and hence the *ṛṣi* of Vedic hymns calls himself not so much the composer of the hymns as the seer of them. Vide S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* Vol I (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1923 Indian ed 1940 9th imp., 1971) p. 128.
- 2 Max Muller supposed the date to be 1200 B.C. Tilak and Jacobi 4000 B.C., Oldenberg and G. Husing 1000 B.C. Winternitz and Haug 2000 B.C. Hugo Winkler 1500 B.C. and Whitney 2000-1500 B.C. See Rapson *The Cambridge History of India* Vol I (London: Cambridge University Press 1921 3rd Indian rpt. Delhi: S. Chand & Co. 1968) pp. 98-100. N.K. Dutt *The Aryanisation of India* (Calcutta: The Author, 1925) pp. 54-57.

the *karma-kāṇḍa* deal with the sacrificial rites and ceremonies and the third one constituting the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* deals with the philosophical and theosophical speculations. The traditional divisions are :

- (1) *Samhitās* ('Sam' together, 'hita' put) or *Mantras* that is collection of hymns, prayers, incantations, etc.
- (2) *Brāhmanas* (or the ritualistic precepts) deal with the sacrificial rites and ceremonies.
- (3) *Āraṇyakas* (or the esoteric doctrine) and
- (4) *Upaniṣads* (or the philosophical speculation) come last.

The *Āraṇyakas* are like appendices to *Brāhmanas*. They contain every thing which was of a secret and mysterious nature that can be taught and learnt in the forest alone. Winternitz³ says that the main contents of these are no longer rules for the performances of the sacrifices and the explanation of ceremonies, but the mysticism and symbolism of sacrifice, priestly philosophy.

Upaniṣads deal with the philosophy of *Brahman* and *Upāsana* of the Absolute or *Nirguṇa* and qualified or *Saguna Brahman* respectively.

Upaniṣads and such portions of the *Āraṇyaka*, as deal with the *jñānakāṇḍa*, form the source of all the later philosophical treatises of India, and in fact all the schools of philosophy have emerged from this common source. The central theme of the *Upaniṣads* is :

- (1) the universal soul, namely the *Brahman*,
- (2) the individual self and its union with the *Brahman*,
- (3) the transmigration of individual souls and final beatitude, etc.

It seeks to investigate "the problems of the meaning of life and the world and of the relation of the individual to the

3 M Winternitz—*A History of Indian Literature*, Vol I Calcutta : University of Calcutta, 1927), p. 233

great unseen forces of the universe”⁴.

As these portions form the concluding part of the *Vedic* literature, it has been called ‘*Vedānta*’, i.e. the end of the *Vedas*, and treated as one of the three *prasthānas* of the *Vedānta* school of philosophy. It is also known as the *Brahma-vidyā* or *Rahasya*. Broadly speaking, *Upaniṣad* means secret knowledge and this knowledge is considered sacred and spiritual. According to *Upaniṣad* the knowledge of the inmost self in us is the spiritual knowledge which can alone lead us to spiritual freedom. The *saṃhitās* are divided into four : *Rg-saṃhitā*, *Sāma-saṃhitā*, *Yajur-saṃhitā* and *Atharva-saṃhitā* called respectively *Rg-veda*, *Sāma-veda*, *Yajur-veda* and *Atharva-veda*. *Rg-veda* contains *mantras* called *Rks*, and they are in the poetic form of prayers, praises and hymns of the gods. *Sāma-veda* contains melodious songs of the gods. *Yajur-veda* deals with the sacrifice and sacrificial rites and formulas and the *Atharva-veda* deals with the Arts and Sciences and also with formula of both white and black magic.

The *Vedic* literature comprises : (1) the four *Vedas* mentioned above ; (2) the *Brāhmanas* or ritual treatises ; (3) the *Āraṇyakas* or the forest treatises which constitute the concluding portions of the *Brāhmanas* ; and (4) *Upaniṣads*, which form the foundation of much of the later Indian philosophy⁵.

To each of these four *saṃhitās* are attached different *Brāhmanas* and *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads*. The positions of the different *Upaniṣads* belonging to different *saṃhitās* are as follows—(See PP. 4-5)

Thus *Upaniṣads* form parts of the concluding chapters of the *Brāhmanas*, *Āraṇyakas* and some of the *Vedic-saṃhitās* and hence they are called the *Vedānta*—the end of the *Vedas*. Śaṅkara the renowned commentator of the *Upaniṣads* refers to them as forming the concluding parts of their respective *Brāhmanas*. The unity in the subject matter of these various treatises was recognised from the very beginning.

4. R. E. Hume—*The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads* (London : Oxford University Press, 1921 : Indian prt., first 1949), p. 1

5. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 12 (Chicago : Oxford and London, 1951), p. 248

<i>Vedas</i>	<i>Brāhmanas</i>	<i>Āraṇyakas</i>	<i>Upaniṣads</i>
<i>Rg-veda</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [i] <i>Altareya Br.</i> [ii] <i>Kaṣṭhakti</i> or <i>Sub- khyādyana</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [i] <i>Altareya Ar.</i> [ii] <i>Kaṣṭhakti Ar.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [i] <i>Altareya Up.</i> (3rd part of the said <i>Ar.</i>). [ii] <i>Kaṣṭhakti Up.</i> (3rd to 6th chapters of the said <i>Ar.</i>).
<i>Sāmaveda</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [i] <i>Talanakāra</i> also called <i>Jatuhya</i> [ii] <i>Tandya-Mahā-Br.</i> also called <i>Pañca-viṅśa</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No <i>Āraṇyaka</i>s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [i] <i>Talanakāra Up.</i> called later on <i>kena Up.</i> [ii] <i>Chāndogya Up.</i> excepting first two chapters of the said <i>Br.</i>
<i>Yajurveda</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [iii] <i>Chāndogya Br.</i> [iv] <i>Sāmavidhāna</i> [v] <i>Devatādhyāya</i> [vi] <i>Vanīśa</i> [vii] <i>Ārṣeya</i> <i>Tattirīya Br.</i> 	<i>Tattirīya Ar.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last four sections constitutes three <i>Upaniṣads</i>. [i] <i>Sāmhita Up.</i> [7th prapāṭha]

Upaniṣads

Āraṇyakas

Brāhmaṇas

Vedas

[1] *Kṛiṣṇa Yajurveda*

Three śukhas
(i) *Kaṣṭhaka*
(ii) *Maitrayani*
(iii) *Kapiśhala*

[2] *Śukla Yajurveda*

(i) *Madhya idini*
or *Vājasaneyi*
(14 *kaṇḍas*)
(ii) *Kaṇva*
(17 *kaṇḍas*)

Atharvaveda

Gopatha Br

No *Āraṇyaka*

- [i] *Mundaka*
- [ii] *Praśna*
- [iii] *Manūkya*
- [iv] *Jabāla*

About 27 *Upaniṣads*
are attributed to *Atharvaveda*

- [ii] *Varuṇ Up* [8th and 9th]
- [iii] *Narayana* also called
Yājñiki or the *Mahana*
raṇana Up [10th]

The other *Upaniṣads* of
this *veda* are [a] *Kaṣṭha*,
[b] *Śvetāśvatara* [c]
Maitrayani The other
Upaniṣad is *Īśavasya*
Upaniṣad

First 3 *kaṇḍas* out
of 14th are called
Āraṇyakas of
which last six
chapters are called
the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka*
Upaniṣad

The number of *Upaniṣads* is large and some of them are considered as major and the rest minor. The *Muktikā Upaniṣad* which is a minor one furnishes us with a list of one hundred and eight *Upaniṣads* and they are classified under different *Vedas*. The collection consisting of 108 different treatises is known as the *Muktikā* collection and is considered to be of southern origin. Another collection consisting of 52 books is known as *Nārāyaṇa* collection. Colebrooke in his collection admitted 52 books but that list is not identical with the *Nārāyaṇa* collection. Darasukho, the eldest son of Shahjahan, who was a great admirer of the *Upaniṣads* arranged to translate them into Arabic and the number of such works goes up to 52. In fact the number of *Upaniṣads* exceeds two hundred, though the Indian tradition puts it at one hundred and eight. But of these again the principal *Upaniṣads* are said to be ten⁶.

The *Brahmasūtra* one of the most important books in Indian religious and philosophical literature mentions only the following ten *Upaniṣads* :

- (1) *Chāndogya*,
- (2) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*,
- (3) *Keṣha*,
- (4) *Taittirīya*
- (5) *Kausītaki*,
- (6) *Mundaḷa*,
- (7) *Praśna*,
- (8) *Śvetāśvatara*
- (9) *Altareya*,
- (10) *Jābāla*

In his celebrated commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* Śaṅkara has made reference to fifteen *Upaniṣads* such as :

- (1) *Chāndogya*
- (2) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*
- (3) *Taittirīya*
- (4) *Mundaḷa*

⁶ Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "Introduction", *The Principal Upaniṣads* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953), pp 20—1

- (5) *Kaṭha*
- (6) *Kauṣītaki*
- (7) *Śvetasvatara*
- (8) *Prasna*
- (9) *Āitareya*
- (10) *Jabala*
- (12) *Mahānārāyaṇa*
- (12) *Īśa*
- (13) *Paingala*
- (14) *Āena*
- (15) *Māṇḍūkya*

Śaṅkara has written commentary on the following *Upaniṣads*

- (1) *Īśa*
- (2) *Āena*
- (3) *Kaṭha*
- (4) *Prasna*
- (5) *Murṇvaka*
- (6) *Māṇḍūkya*
- (7) *Taittirīya*
- (8) *Āitareya*
- (9) *Chāndogya*
- (10) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*
- (11) *Śvetasvatara*

The first ten are recognised as the principal *Upaniṣads*. We shall focus our attention on these *Upaniṣads* for the purpose of our study of the proposed work.

Modern scholars generally agree that the ancient prose *Upaniṣads* *Āitareya*, *Kauṣītaki*, *Chāndogya*, *Kena*, *Taittirīya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* together with *Īśa* and *Kaṭha* belong to eighth and seventh centuries B.C.⁷

But it is very difficult to trace either any logical or chronological order of the *Upaniṣads*. It is equally difficult to say which one of these principal *Upaniṣads* comes earlier and which one later.

We do not even find any accurate evidence of any systematic development of the philosophical speculation which can help us to determine their chronology. "The *Upanisads*" observes Dr. Radhakrishnan, "are vehicles more of spiritual illumination than of systematic reflection. They reveal to us a world of rich and varied spiritual experience rather than a world of abstract philosophical categories. Their truths are verified not by logical reason but by personal experience. Their aim is practical rather than speculative"⁸.

However, we propose to take a bird's eye view of the principal *Upanisads* which are ten in number with a special reference to the sphere of education leaving aside their bearing on religious and philosophical speculations.

ĪŚA UPANISAD

This *Upanisad* forms the last chapter of the white *Yajurveda* and consists of eighteen verses only. It is a very small but authentic *Upanisad* and it has a great importance in the *Vedāntic* literature of the later age.

Īśa or *Īśāvāsya* which is so called after the first word of the first verse⁹ is comparatively a small treatise which inculcates the moral teaching as 'Not to covet other's wealth, but to enjoy what is given by God'. One is to perform one's own duty in a spirit of non-attachment and live a life of long hundred years and enjoy the fruit of his own labour and not to covet other's wealth or property. It is useless to think of enjoyment in terms of somebody's wealth. The teacher says that to enjoy what is given to us and to covet other's wealth is to display ignorance. To be satisfied with what is given to us is the source of real enjoyment and happiness.

Whoever sees all things in God, and God in all things does not hate any one or keep him separate from any one.

The idea of looking upon every thing as one's own self is indeed a lofty one and that the same self is everywhere is the key note of the highest philosophy of life. It is for this

⁸ Ibid., pp 23-4

⁹ *Īśa īśam idam sarvam yat kinca jagatyām jagat*

reason that the teacher of the *Upaniṣad* preaches that to do good to others is the highest morality. By such teachings the student can have a broader outlook, ennoble their mind and develop their higher thought in life.

In this *Upaniṣad* the teacher has made a bold departure from the usual precept of the *Upaniṣad* to inculcate devotion to knowledge in preference to action. Here the teacher brings out the synthesis of action and knowledge and considers it as the effectual means to attain perfection in life, and declares that the action and knowledge are to be pursued with equal stress. Action which is not inspired by knowledge cannot bring out fruitful results. Knowledge without action is barren. Mere action leads one to darkness and again mere ideation leads him still to a deeper darkness. Thus it is said that mere ideational knowledge and activity are both meaningless and cannot lead a man to illumination. The teacher, therefore, holds that there should be harmonious cultivation of both knowledge and action. In other words it may be said that spiritual aspiration and material prosperity should be well-balanced and harmonised leaving no room for one being overpowered by the other. This is indeed the law of life only which can bring about the completeness of human life and can lead to immortal bliss.

In the end the teacher has clearly pointed out that our action must not delude us away from the path of truth. We shall have to acquire true knowledge by study. Further, the teacher emphatically declares, 'Let this body be burnt. . . but not let our actions die. Let it remain in the memory of posterity'. The teacher reveals that the Real Truth is concealed under the glitter of knowledge as the real form of the sun is obscured from our view by the radiant light surrounding the same.

KENA UPANIṢAD

Like the *Isā-vāsyopaniṣad*, the *Kena Upaniṣad* has also derived the name from the first word of its first verse '*Kena*'. According to Śaṅkara and other commentators this *Upaniṣad*

is also known as *Talavakūropaniṣad*, as it forms the ninth chapter of the said *Brāhmaṇa*.

The *Kena Upaniṣad* is clearly divided into two sections out of four parts. The first two parts are in the form of dialogue and discussion in which the teacher and the student try to explore the subject of inquiry namely the fundamental problem of existence. In this *Upaniṣad* we find a clear picture of a close relationship of the teacher and the student where the teacher has allowed the student to ask any number of questions till he is fully convinced and satisfied with answers given by him to clarify the points of inquiry.

The notable feature of this *Upaniṣad* lies in the fact that it gives a subtle psychological analysis of the human understanding and its relation to the *Ultimate Reality* which has been recognised here as a given fact of experience. '*Pratibodha-viditaṁ matam*' (*Kena*. 2-4) which is the ever-present subject of experience.

The subject is introduced with the inquiry, impelled by whom the mind, the life, the senses go to their respective objects and do their works¹⁰. To this the answer is given as there is one who is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the life of the life and the eye of the eye ; by whom the senses, the life and the mind are sustained and regulated¹¹. Then the teacher explains the nature of that underlying *Reality* in a number of verses. It is *Brahman* alone that is the eternal witness behind all the states of consciousness.

The second part of the *Upaniṣad* begins with inquiry about *Brahman* but the teacher in the midst of the profound metaphysical discussion, introduces a story which carries further the main topic under discussion. The teacher tells his disciple how this highest spiritual knowledge is imparted to the gods by a female deity *Umā*, the daughter of *Himavat*.

The teacher of this *Upaniṣad* reveals to his disciple the greatness of this human birth and the highest possibility

10. *Kena*, 1 1.

11. *Ibid*, 1 2.

that lies before it. The *Upaniṣad* declares that the realisation of the self is to be obtained in this life itself and if we fail to achieve it, then there is great destruction meaning thereby we will miss the unique opportunity of human birth. So says the *Upaniṣad* :

*Iha cedavedīdatha satyamasti
na cedihā, cādīmahatī naṣṭi ;
bhūteṣu bhūteṣu vicitṛa dhīrāḥ
pretyāsmālokaḍamṣtū bhavanti* (Kena, 2-5)

If one has realised it here in this world, then there is truth, if he has not realised it here, then there is great destruction. The wise one having realised *Brahman* in all things and having turned away from this world, becomes immortal.

It is evident that the teacher of the *Upaniṣad* longs for immortality which can be enjoyed after the departure from this world.

KATHA UPANISAD

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* is one of the finest and most widely known of all the *Upaniṣads*. It is divided into two chapters of three *vallis* each. This *Upaniṣad* is variously associated with the *Kaṭhaśūkhā* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda*, the *Sāma veda* and the *Atharva veda*. It is in the form of a dialogue between Yama, the god of death, the teacher, and Naciketas, a Brāhmaṇ boy of tender age, the disciple who is the son of the Rṣi Vājasravasa.

In this *Upaniṣad* we find a beautiful example of the intimate relationship existing between the teacher and the student in which both of them are in communion with each other. The prayer mantra recited by the teacher and the disciple at the beginning of their discourse reveals that there is a perfect understanding and co-operation between them in the discovery of truth. They are co-partners in the pursuit of knowledge. The *Upaniṣad* tells us that the education is a journey to be performed by both the teacher and the student together, and there should be no ill will to each other, further, in this

Upaniṣad we find a clear picture of the relationship of respect between the teacher and the student all throughout in an atmosphere of complete discipline and confidence born out of freedom.

In *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* the subject of the mystery of death is introduced through the medium of a dialogue between Naciketas, the young earnest inquirer, who had gone to the abode of Death in search of the great secret of life and death and Yama, the Lord of Death.

During the course of their discussion the teacher explains the nature of the wisdom that lies beyond life and death. In this *Upaniṣad* we find a clear exposition of the nature of the Self or the Ultimate Reality which is emphatically declared as the indwelling Spirit of all beings, *Sarvabhūtāntarātmā*¹².

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* repeatedly indicates the result of knowing the Ultimate Reality which is no other than the attainment of immortality : '*Ya etadbīduramṛtāste bhavanti*'¹³. One of the distinguishing features of this *Upaniṣad* is that it is characterised by a lofty moral earnestness. The discourse of Yama clearly brings out a distinction between right and wrong, between the good and the pleasant. In this *Upaniṣad* we are told that 'one who has not desisted from bad conduct, whose senses are not controlled, whose mind is not under control, who is not free from anxiety, cannot attain this self through knowledge.

*'Nāśrato duṣcaritānnāśānto nāsamāhitah
nāśāntamānaso vāpi prajñānenainamāpnuyāt'*¹⁴

Here the teacher indicates that in the process of education the student should be of pure conduct, of tranquil mind and subdued passions. Further, in this *Upaniṣad* the teacher tells the student to struggle hard till the highest goal, immortality is reached, and he compares spiritual struggle to walking on the edge of a razor. It exhorts the seeker of truth, '*Uttiṣṭhata jūgrata prāpya varūn nibodhata*'¹⁵. 'Arise, awake

12. *Kaṭha*, 2.2.9, 10, 11

13. *Ibid* 2.3.2

14. *Ibid*, 1.2.24

15. *Kaṭha*, 1.3.14

and stop not till the goal is reached' as rendered by Swami Vivekananda. The *Kaṣha Upaniṣad* tells us that the great secret cannot be gained by logical reasoning but only by a communion with the teacher. The teacher of the science of the *Self* should be a wonderful person—*uścaryo vaktā* and the student, the seeker should also be highly talented '*Kuśalo asya labhdu*'. This communion can only lead a man from '*aparā vidyā*' to '*parā vidyā*' or to the knowledge of the *Eternal Reality* underlying the world of change. Education is a journey from darkness to light illuminating the heart and mind. The *Kaṣha Upaniṣad*¹⁶ reveals the nature of this journey

*Nayamātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhaya na bahuna srutena
yamevaiṣa vṛnute tena labhyaḥ
tasyaṣa atmā vṛnute tanum svam*

This self cannot be gained by the study of the *Vedas*, not by intellect, nor by much learning. He is attainable by him only whom this (*Self*) chooses. To such an aspirer the *Self* reveals Its own nature.

The *Kaṣha Upaniṣad*¹⁷ sums up the whole teaching in the following *mantra* :

*Yadā sarve pramucyante kamā yeśya hṛdasi, śrutāḥ
athamartyomṛto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnute*

When all desires that cling to the heart are destroyed then the mortal becomes immortal. This is the sacred teaching. When all ties that bind the heart are rent asunder, then the mortal becomes immortal. This is the sacred teaching. This is the philosophy of life and death. This is the aim and object of our life.

PRAŚNA UPANIṢAD

This *Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Atharvaveda* and seems to be of the *Pippalādaśakhā*. According to Śaṅkara this *Upaniṣad*

16 *Ibid* 1 2 23
17 *Ibid* 2 3 14

appertains to the *Brahmaṇa* portion giving a detailed exposition of the *Mantra Upanisad* i.e. the *Mundaka* belonging to the same *veda*. The book consists of six chapters dealing with six questions. It opens with the account of six spiritual aspirants who approach the preceptor, Pippalāda, to know the nature of things and for enlightenment. They are all *Brahma-parah* and *Brahmaniṣṭhah* and are desirous of knowing the truth and the discourses are carried out in the form of a dialogue. But the teacher asks the aspirants to stay with him for another year under the required spiritual disciplines and allows them to ask whatever questions they desire to ask. He promises to answer them provided he has the requisite knowledge. In this *Upanisad* we find a clear statement of an intellectual honesty on the part of a teacher who does not pretend to know everything in this world. Here we find the picture of a scientific inquiry into the nature of things, in which the teacher and the students are deeply engrossed. Further, we find here a clear mention being made of the creation taking place from Matter and Energy.

On completion of the discipline required Kabandhī Kātyāyana, one of the aspirants, approaches the preceptor and asks about the source of all created beings. The teacher replies that *Prajāpati* creates first the matter and life of *raji* and *prāṇa* by an interaction from which the creation takes place and maintains its continuity. Then the second of the inquirers, Vaidarbhi, the son of Bhṛgu, approaches the teacher and asks him about the number of deities, and the chief among them. But from what follows it will appear that the question is 'who supports this body' or who keeps this body vibrant with activity.

The teacher first replies that there are five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether which unite and integrate the body together. But the disciple wants to know—who makes the body active or moving, and the teacher replies that it is the sense organism that keeps the body moving of which the *prāṇa*, the vital force, is the greatest. Here in the *Upanisad* the teacher establishes the supremacy of *prāṇa* by practicing

demonstrating that when *prāṇa* wants to go out of the physical body all the other vital powers loose their strength. The teacher thereby wants to explain that the senses will be powerless without *prāṇa* or the vital breath.

In order to carry the discussion further the third disciple Kausalya, the son of Aśvala, puts a very searching question to Pippalāda "whence does this *prāṇa* come? How does it come into the body? How does it go out? How does it support what is without and what is within?

The teacher replies that *prāṇa* is born from the *Spirit*. It is from the *Spirit* that everything is born and nothing can exist without it. The teacher explains the nature of *prāṇa* by a simile of the substance and the shadow. *Prāṇa* vitalizes the body but remains intangible. Further, the teacher says, '*prāṇa* enters the body through the activities of the mind'. The teacher wants to say that *prāṇa* is impelled by the activities of the mind. Then follows the five-fold nature of *prāṇa* as *prāṇa*, *apāṇa*, *vyāṇa*, *udāna* and *samāna*. Mind and body are inter related and *prāṇa* is the bridge between them. *Prāṇa* by its five fold functions keeps the body and the mind healthy and vital.

The third question reveals to us that the functioning of *prāṇa* depends upon the mind. Then the fourth inquirer Gārgya, the son of Sūrya asks the fourth question which relates to the state or functioning of human consciousness. Here the teacher discusses the states of waking, dream and deep sleep which are the modes of the mind bringing about a modification have their root in the mind. The three stages—waking, the dream and the deep sleep refer respectively to the conscious, the sub-conscious and the unconscious layers of the mind. After a brief account of the state of consciousness the teacher says that the activities of the mind are guided by intelligence. The teacher has explained that the integration of mind is affected by intelligence. It is intelligence which illumines the mind.

Thereafter the fifth inquirer Satyakāma, the son of Śibi asks the teacher about the sublime subject of meditation on the sacred syllable *Om*. The teacher replies that when a man learns to meditate on *Om* properly then he knows the *Ultimate Reality* in its manifest and the unmanifest condition. In fact he becomes free from all corruption even as a snake sheds its old skin. The teacher said that the syllable *Om* is the immanent and transcendent *Reality* where the meditator and the object of meditation becomes one.

At last Sukeśā, the son of Bharadvāja, asks the last question "where is that *Person* with sixteen parts"? The teacher replies, "That *Person* dwells in the human body itself, in whom these sixteen parts grow. This *Person* is no other than the *Ātman*, the conscious *Being* in man, *Brahman*, higher than whom there is nothing to be known.

Thus bringing the entire discussion to a close the preceptor Pippalāda informs the disciples that that is all that he knows about the problem of life. The inquirers return satisfied with the instruction of the teacher. They address the teacher saying :

'Thou art indeed our father who hath taken us to other shore of nescience'¹⁸.

The teacher by removing the doubts of the student has taken them from the shore of ignorance to the shore of knowledge. The teacher has brought the students from the known to the unknown, from the manifest to the unmanifest and from the gross material to supreme spiritual.

MUNḌAKA UPANISAD

The *Munḍaka Upaniṣad* belongs to *Atharvaveda*, and is divided into three *Munḍakas* of two sections each. Thus the whole *Upaniṣad* is divided into six chapters.

Śaunaka, a great householder, approaches the great sage Aṅgiras, in the traditional manner and submits to him the

18 *Praśna*, 6-8, 'tvam hi nah pitā yo' smākam avidyāyāḥ paramāṁ pāram tāravyasī, iti namaḥ parama ṛṣibhyo namaḥ parama ṛṣibhyoḥ.

question "what is that, revered sir, which when known all is known?" It may be noted that this sort of inquiry is found in the teaching of Uddalaka to Śvetaketu in the *Chândogya* and of Yājñavalkya to Maitreyī in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*.

The teacher instead of giving a straight answer to the question begins his discussion with a classification of knowledge into *para* and *aparā*—the higher and the lower. The teacher says, '*Tatrāparā ṛg veda yajur vedaḥ sāmā veda' tharīa vedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaranam niruktam chandojyotiṣamiti, atha parā, yaṣā tadakṣaramadhigamya*' (M U, 1-15)

Of these the lower knowledge is the knowledge of the *Ṛg veda*, *Yajur veda*, *Sāmā veda*, *Atharva veda*, Phonetics, Rituals, Grammar, Etymology, Metrics and Astronomy. And the higher knowledge is that by which the Imperishable is known.

In this *Upaniṣad* knowledge of all sciences, and arts is considered as lower knowledge and all other secular knowledge is also included in this category. Then the teacher says about the higher knowledge—the knowledge of the *Immutable* which can be realised by one who has attained illumination.

By means of the higher knowledge the wise perceive everywhere *Brahman* which is otherwise invisible, inconceivable unoriginated and attributeless, what has neither eyes nor ears, nor hands, nor feet, which is eternal and omnipresent, all pervading and extremely subtle, which is imperishable and the source of all beings¹⁹.

The *Mundaka* is concerned with the perception of *Brahman* by the wise everywhere which otherwise cannot be seen and the teacher leads, step by step, his pupil to that perception, the supreme goal of all philosophy.

In the *Mundaka* we find a description of the nature of the creation and the relation of the created world with the creator. The teacher says-

*Yathornanābhīḥ sṛjate gṛhnate ca
Yathā prthivyāmavadhayaḥ sambhavanti
Yathā sataḥ puruṣūṭ keśalomāni
tathāḥsarāt sambhavatīha vīśvam*

(M U., 1-1-7)

As the spider releases and withdraws the web, as plants grow on the earth, as hairs come out from a living person, so from the *Imperishable Being* does the universe spring forth

Here the teacher draws three similes from the animal, the plant and the human kingdoms to illustrate the spontaneity of creation from the *Imperishable Brahman*. *Brahman* creates the Universe without any effort, out of *Itself* even as the spider spins its own thread, and withdraws it again into itself with perfect ease. The creation has also been compared to the thousand of sparks emitted by a blazing fire²⁰. These illustrations clearly indicate that creation is only the kinetic manifestation of what already exists potentially in the *Brahman*.

The *Mundaka* makes it abundantly clear that the knowledge of *Brahman* is the Higher knowledge or *parā vidyā* which involves long and arduous effort. It has been declared in the *Upaniṣad* that the knowledge of *Brahman* cannot be attained by the weak-minded

'Nāyamātmā Valahinena labhyah'

(M.U. 3-2-4)

Further, the *Upaniṣad* says that *Brahman* cannot be seen by the eyes, nor can be apprehended by any other senses, nor can be attained by rituals and penances. So says the *Upaniṣad* :-

*Na cakṣuṣā gṛhyate nāpi vācā
nānyairdevais tapasā karmenā vā.*

(M U. 3-1-8)

Further, the *Upaniṣad* tells that the knowledge of *Brahman* cannot be attained by mere reading of scriptures, nor by recitation of texts, nor by keen intellect

*Nāyamātmā pravacanena labhya
na medhaya na bahunā śrutena*

(M U 3 2 3)

The teacher makes a very significant statement regarding the attainment of the highest end. He compares the process of higher knowledge to that of piercing a distant object with an arrow. *Brahman* is the target, the soul is the arrow and *pranava* is the bow, and the skilful archer hits the target with diligent and careful attention, so the devoted aspirant can know *Brahman*, by careful attention²¹. The teacher says again that *Brahman* can be realised by the practice of truth, by complete knowledge, by concentration and discipline

*Satyena labhyaśtapasā hyeṣa ātmā
saṁyag jñānena brahmacaryena nitam*

M U 3 1-5)

'The self is attained through truth, concentration, wisdom and continence'

The teacher further reveals a still deeper truth while he says that *Brahman* can be seen when the inmost heart has been purified by knowledge

*Jñānaprasādena viśuddhasattva
statastu tam paśyate niṣkalam dhyāyamanah*

M U 3-1 8)

'when one is purified through pure knowledge he realises Him, the Absolute, by meditation'

The *Muṇḍaka* tells us that the spiritual aspirant should approach a *guru*, with fuel in his hand to understand the *Eternal*. The *guru* should be well versed in the *Vedas* and

rooted in *Brahman*. The fuel in hand is considered as the required qualification for deep spiritual inquiry and also indicates the desire of the pupil to participate in the religious performances of the teacher. The teacher and the student should engage themselves in the discovery of truth. This is what the *Upaniṣad* tells us. Over and above the *Upaniṣad* speaks of the doctrine of grace on the question of attaining the *Ultimate Reality*. For it says that the *Supreme Spirit* can be attained by him only whom *He* chooses :

‘Yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhya-
stasyaiṣa ātmā vīvṛṇute tenūm sūm’

(M.U. 3-2-3)

The moment one has the vision of that immortal light one becomes free from ignorance. The teacher says that truth, knowledge and ‘self-discipline’ are the *Supreme Knowledge*, the *Supreme Truth*. This *Upaniṣad* lays great emphasis on self-discipline, without which it is not possible to acquire knowledge. This is what is called the path of *brahmacharya*, which can alone lead to the abode of *Brahman*.

The path is strewn with truth
‘Satyēn panthā vītato devayānah.

(M.U. 3-1-6)

MĀNDŪKYA UPANISAD

The *Māndūkya* is the shortest of the principal *Upaniṣads* and is named probably after its teacher by the name of *Mundaka* who has expounded the teaching contained in it. This *Upaniṣad* also belongs to the *Atharva-veda* group of *Upaniṣads*. It is the shortest of all the *Upaniṣads* and within its short compass of twelve passages it speaks of the entire range of human consciousness and finally speaks of *Reality* as a mass of mere consciousness - an absolute state of superconsciousness leaving no trace of any objective relations and perceptions of quality, and says ‘All this is surely *Brahman* (*Sarvaṃ hi etat Brahman*) this *Self* is *Brahman*, (*ayamātmā Brahman*).

In this *Upaniṣad* we find the glorification of the *pranava* and the method of analysis of the three states of consciousness

waking, dream and deep sleep. These three states are signified by the three constituents of *Om* namely 'a' 'u' and 'm' and the integral import of *Om* is the transcendent spirit beyond the empirical self. This *Upaniṣad* says that '*Om*' when meditated upon in the proper way, it becomes helpful for one for the realisation of *Brahman*.

The teacher of the *Upaniṣad* says that the individual soul is bound by the three states referred to above. The individual soul should make an endeavour to achieve the state of *turiya* by overcoming all other states. In the state of *turiya* the individual soul can enjoy eternal peace and eternal happiness of the non-dual soul.

TAITTIRĪYA UPANISAD

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* derives its name from the teacher Taittiri. This *Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Valśampāyana* school of *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda* and originally it forms a part of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* forming its seventh, eighth and ninth *Prapaṭhaka*. This *Upaniṣad* is divided into three sections and they are known as *Śikhā-valli*, *Brahma-valli* and *Bhṛgu-valli*.

This *Upaniṣad* gives us the information about the educational system, namely, the *gurukula* system which is one of the notable contributions of Indian culture and civilization to the field of education. Further, the *Upaniṣad* gives us some of the essential features of the education of the *Upaniṣadic* ago.

The first section concerns itself with some of the fundamental principles of education and stresses impressively the method of imparting instruction which makes the system unique by itself. The teacher of this *Upaniṣad* has first of all laid emphasis on the importance of the sensory organ especially of the sense of hearing which he considers to be the basic factor of learning process. The student who learns how to listen can understand the subject matter quickly. In fact the listening process makes him attentive and ultimately converts him to be real *śrāvaka*. Thereafter the teacher

explains the science of pronunciation as an essential quality required of a teacher for the science of hearing, it largely depends upon the science of proper articulation. So in the process of learning both the teacher and the student should be acquainted with the science of proper articulation.

One of the functions of education is to give the student the power to communicate, and the value of education lies in the capacity of the communication of the experience gathered throughout the journey of education to others effectively.

The teacher then turns to the speech or the spoken words which is considered to be the effective means of communication and consequently refers to the six limbs of speech directing the attention of the students to form of speech rather than the contents of the speech. The teacher for any effective communication feels the necessity of perfection in speech and therefore discusses its organic limbs or constituents, namely, *varṇa* (quality), *śvara* (pitch), *mātrā* (pause); *bala* (emphasis), *śūma* (modulation), *santāna* (combination). When the teacher and the student become well acquainted with these limbs then they can communicate effectively with each other and the purpose of education is achieved thereby.

This section of *Upaniṣad* is essentially a treatise of the hermit school. The teacher expresses repeated desire for many scholars. "May scholars come to me, may scholars come to me quickly, may they come to me from all direction" (T.U. 1-4-2).

The section concludes with a noble discourse which has come to be known as the convocation address given by the teacher to the students who has completed his formal education. In this address a sublime code of conduct is presented for guidance of the student in his life. The teacher tells the student that his education in the *gurukula* is not the end of learning rather it is the beginning of learning. He must keep up his studies in the subject so that he may find more new light of wisdom with further researches. If he fails

to do so his studies in the *gurukula* will be ineffective in the long run.

In the second section of the *Upaniṣad* we find the central philosophy of the *Upaniṣadic* speculation '*Brahma-vidāpnotiparam*' (T.U. 2-1-1), the knower of *Brahman* attains the absolute. In this section we find that *Brahman* has been defined as that which is real (*satya*), consciousness (*jñāna*) and infinite (*ananta*). The concept is further developed and a final categorisation of the nature of *Brahman* is attempted. Thus the *Brahman* is identified progressively as *anna-maya*, *prāṇa-maya*, *mano-maya*, *vijñāna-maya* and *ānanda-maya*, that is, as consisting of matter, life, mind, consciousness and bliss. Thus the *Upaniṣad* after a searching analysis of the constitution of the universe arrives at the final concept that the *Ultimate Reality* behind the visible universe is *Ānanda*.

The third section is only a recapitulation of the second section in a different setting. Bhṛgu Vārūṇi approaches his father for knowledge of *Brahman* and says, 'Teach me, sir, about *Brahman*'. The father-cum-preceptor advises him to know the *Brahman* by meditation. Bhṛgu follows his father's advice and after continued search step by step arrives at the final solution, *Brahman* is *Ānanda*. After the student's discovery that *Brahman* is *Ānanda*, the teacher stops Bhṛgu's further search. In the conclusion also the second section is repeated in the third section. This has been termed the *Bhārgavi-Vārūṇi-Vidyā*. The son says that creation comes out of *Bliss*, it is sustained by *Bliss* and it resolves back to *Bliss*. This is the highest revelation that the *Upaniṣadic* sages have made that *Brahman* is *Ānanda*, or God is Love, God is Supreme Joy, '*Raso Vai saḥ*' (T.U. 2-7).

The teacher of the *Taittirīya* wants to build up man of to-day, with character to be the perfect citizen of tomorrow through whom the flow of knowledge can be continued and carried on from generation to generation. The teacher desires that the students should be human in every way and should realise the spiritual existence of life. They should prove themselves to be the sons of immortality and not of death.

ĀITAREYA UPANISAD

The *Aitareyopaniṣad* derives its name from the teacher, Mahidāsa Aitareya, the son of Itarā. The *Aitareyopaniṣad* is also known as *Bahvṛcopeniṣad*. It forms part of the *Aitareya Aranyaka* of the *Rg-veda*.

The teacher of the *Aitareyopaniṣad* begins his instruction with a prayer for perfect harmony and accord between mind and speech. The *Upaniṣad* is famous for its opening declaration and its final conclusion. Thus in its opening verse it says 'Ātmāṁ idameka evāgra āsit, nānyat kiñcana miṣat sa īḥṣata lokānnu sṛjā iti' (A U. 1-1-1).

In the beginning, all this was *Ātman* only. Nothing else was there. He resolved 'Let me create the worlds'.

Thus in the very opening statement it has been affirmed that the manifold universe is the creation of the fundamental reality which is conceived as *Ātman* and that the creation is conceived as an act of will of that primeval *Ātman*.

The *Upaniṣadic* seer speaks in accordance with what modern science tells us regarding the beginning of life on earth. It tells that the first sign of life appeared in the waters. The *Upaniṣad* says that the sentient life began in water and the life precedes form.

The *Upaniṣad* speaks of three births of man constituting the three states of consciousness, namely, the *jāgrti* or the waking state, the *svapna* or the dream and the *susupti* or the deep sleep. The *Upaniṣad* holds that it is in the state of deep sleep which is conceived as a dreamless naive state baffling description is a condition of wisdom in which one would come to the understanding of *Brahman*, the unmanifest. The *Upaniṣad* says that the deep sleep is a condition of wisdom or *prajñāna* and the real nature of *Brahman* can be known in this condition of wisdom alone. The spiritual freedom can be achieved in this state only. The manifold expressions of consciousness in life are enumerated, and then it is asserted that the universe is rooted in *prajñāna* or consciousness.

is guided by it and is established in it. This *Upaniṣad* speaks of the universe as consciousness as its end.

*S rvaṁ tat prajāṁ retam prajāṇāṁ pra liṣṭham
prajāṁ retā lokāḥ prajāṁ pratiṣṭhā,
prajāṇāṁ hr̥dī ma' (A U 3 1-3)

All that is guided by consciousness is founded on consciousness. The whole world is guided by consciousness. The support is consciousness. Therefore consciousness is *Brahman*.

This *Upaniṣad* lays stress more on the manifest *Brahman* than on the unmanifest one. It says that the *Brahman* or the spirit entering into the body brings about a coordination of all bodily functions. Further, it speaks not only of the co-ordination of physical functions but also of psychological functions. In fact the presence of *Brahman* serves as a unifying force in the universe. *Brahman* acts for the co-ordination of the functions of the mind. The *Upaniṣad* gives a perfect analysis of the functions of the mind. The functioning group of the mind are enumerated as five, namely, Thought, Awareness, Continuity, Imagination and Intelligence. Regarding the mind's functioning the final element is the intelligence. It is intelligence which controls the mind and through the mind the functioning of the body as well. It is because of the guidance of intelligence that there is no disintegration of the mind and malfunctioning of the body. The *Upaniṣad* sums up its entire teaching in the concluding verse. He is *Brahman*, he is Indra, he is Parjāpati, he is all these gods, and all creatures are established, guided, and sustained by the Self, who is called *Prajāna* or intelligence. *Brahman* is intelligence.

In this *Upaniṣad*, it is not only the non-dualism of the creation with the creator that is explained, but it also establishes the unending love and compassion hidden in the creation. God does not stop by creating but fulfils His creation by establishing Himself in it as the truth of each object. The inherent truth in each object is to be discovered by the true knowledge. It is with knowledge only that one can realise oneself, the unity in diversity.

CHĀNDOGYA UPANISAD

The *Chandogya Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Sāma veda* and form, a part of the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa* of the *Tāndya* branch of the said *Veda*. The last eight chapters of the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa* constitute the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of which the last three chapters are considered to be the outcome of the boldest speculation of the *Upaniṣadic* age.

The *Upaniṣad* introduces us to such searching inquirers and earnest seekers after truth as Nārada, Satyakāma, Indra, Śvetaketu, etc., and venerable teachers like Sanatkumāra, Uddalaka Āruṇi and Prajāpati. The discourse between Nārada and Sanatkumara, appearing in the seventh chapter of the *Chandogya* clearly reveals to us the essential feature of the hermit school of the *Upaniṣadic* age.

Narada, an inquirer, approaches sage Sanatkumāra and begs to show him the path of wisdom or enlightenment. Sanatkumāra asks him to enumerate the subjects he has studied on being told that he has acquired mastery over the subjects comprising both the sciences and the humanities taught in the school, the teacher declares that they are but names. From the list of subjects studied in the *gurukula* as enumerated by Narada it can well be presumed that education in ancient India was truly integrated. Here we find that Sanatkumara takes the pupil from where he stands and thereby indicates the fundamental principle of education of moving from the gross to the subtle, from the known to the unknown. Further, we are told in this *Upaniṣad* that various *vidyās* and sciences existed then in flourishing condition and were cultivated extensively in the hermit schools of the *Upaniṣadic* age.

In the *Chāndogya* we find some of the essential features of the *gurukula* system of education. In this system the students require to pass some time with the teacher in his *āśrama* for orientation whatever might be the past acquirement of the student, and the teacher considers this to be the essential requirement of a student are required to undergo the disciplinary process adopted in the hermit schools. From the discourse

between Nārada and Sanatkumāra it can be well imagined that the students do not consider their education received in the *gurukula* to be adequate to fulfil their highest desire and aim in life. They are everkeen to learn more and more even after the completion of the formal education in the *gurukula*. They are never content with what they learn, rather, they regard the schooling term in the *gurukula* only as a means for further future advancement by self-study. They want to move from *aparā vidyā* to *parā-vidyā*, from darkness to illumination, from knowledge to wisdom and from the unreal to the real.

The *Chāndogya* begins with the description of the glories of the sacred word *Om* as the *udgītha* which is considered to be the purest expression of the highest God equivalent to *Brahman*. The knowledge of *udgītha*, the holy syllable to be sung is called the *udgītha-vidyā* by the understanding of which one can achieve *amṛta*, the nectar, the essence of life.

The second chapter of the *Chāndogya* thus glorifies the *Sāma vedā* "yat khalu sādhu tat sāmam", whatever is good is *sāmam* (C.U. 2-1-1), which leads to various results.

Third chapter of this *Upaniṣad* opens with the glorification of the sun, which is identified with *Madhu* and the knowledge of it is known as the *Madhu-vidyā*, the sweetest of all knowledge. The *Upaniṣad* says 'asau vā ādityo devamadhu'. The whole universe is sustained by him. Then the same *vidyā* is also expounded through *Gāyatrī*. *Gāyatrī* out of several metres has been chosen as the means of acquiring the knowledge of *Brahman*.

In the fourth chapter we find the story of Jānaśruti and Raikva which shows that goodness without wisdom cannot help a man in achieving the highest goal of life—the spiritual illumination ; and the essential qualification required of a disciple is to receive proper instruction from the teacher who is a realised soul. Jānaśruti with his numerous gifts is refused as a disciple by the teacher Raikva. But when he approaches the teacher with humility and supplication he is received and instructed, for the teacher realises the readiness of the pupil. The

worthiness of a pupil depends on his mental condition and behaviour. The simplicity of mind and purity of heart can alone lead an aspirant to spiritual illumination. In support we find an exalted example of a simple mind in the person of Satyakāma Jābūla in the same chapter of the *Upaniṣad*. Satyakāma is accepted by his teacher Hārīdrumata. Gautama, as a worthy disciple on the ground that he must be a Brāhmin, because he has spoken the truth. Satyakāma though born of a mother of questionable character is received and admitted to *āśrama* school by his teacher who is bold enough to disregard the norms of social respectability and is free from caste-prejudices. The admission of Satyakāma to *gurukula* clearly shows us that caste is not a barrier for an ardent student to receive education there. The teachers of the *Upaniṣad* are truly catholic in temperament and free from social bias. The teacher is so moved by the truthfulness of Satyakāma that he readily accepts him as a worthy disciple and initiates him into *brahmacarya* (i.e., the life of education).

From the instances of Jānaśruti and Satyakāma it can be reasonably assumed that the teacher of the *Upaniṣadic* age laid great emphasis on the simplicity of mind and heart of the students while imparting instruction to them.

The *Upaniṣad* then proceeds to expound the *Agni-vidyā* and the story of Upakosala Kāmalāyana is introduced to show that both faith (*śraddhā*) and austerity (*tapas*) are essential on the part of the student for achieving the highest knowledge in life. So says Śaṅkara, "*Ākhyāikā pūrvavacchraddhā-tapasorbrahma-vidyā sūdhanatvapradar-sanārthā*".

Then in this sixth chapter of the *Upaniṣad* we find the famous story of Uddālaka and his son Śvetaketu. The whole of the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya* consists of the teaching of Uddālaka to his son Śvetaketu, and the teaching is known as *Sad-vidyā*. The teaching of this chapter is meant for the first grade students only so the teacher of the *Upaniṣad*

manages to explain the same thing in the next chapter as well so that the average student can follow the principle without facing difficulty. The teacher teaches the subject step by step by following the principle known as '*Arundhatīnyāya*' leading to the highest truth and to show the highest truth the story of Nārada and Sanatkumāra is introduced.

Thus it can be said that the teacher of the *Upaniṣad* adopts the methods useful for achieving the highest aim of life by all types of disciples whether he is intelligent or not. 'Satyakāma while teaching the meditative contemplation on life to Goṣruti, the son of Vyāghrapāda says, 'Even if a sapless dried up trunk of a tree hears this massage, new branches will come out and new leaves will appear on them'²². This is the message of the *Upaniṣad* which is most revealing and sincere, which opens the heart of the seers and shows the beauty of truth.

BṚHADĀRANYAKA UPANISAD

Lastly, let us turn to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* which is the biggest of the *Upaniṣads* by its size, the greatest by its height of vision and supreme by its utterances of the *Vedāntic* thought. It forms the final portion of the *Śatapatha-Bṛāhmaṇa* of the white *Yajurveda*. This *Upaniṣad* belongs to both the branches of the said *Veda* namely the *Kāṇva* and the *Mādhyandina*. The *Upaniṣad* in hand belongs to the *Kāṇva* school on which, Śaṅkara has commented upon, and it consists of six chapters each of which are in turn divided into several sections. It is an *Upaniṣad* written mostly in prose and that even in the style of the *Bṛāhmaṇā* type of composition.

In this *Upaniṣad* the boldest speculations of the age have been fully developed and attracted the minds of the intellectuals of the land, for in it the central ideas of the *Upaniṣad* have taken a more definite and systematic shape.

22 C.U., 5 23 *Yadyapyetechuṣkāya sthāṇave brūyāt, jāyeraṇnevās-
mīṇśakhaḥ praroheṣuḥ palāśāntī.*

In loftiness of thought and beauty of expression it has occupied an exalted and unassailable position in the whole range of the religious literature of India. In this *Upaniṣad* it may be said that we find the central teaching of all the principal *Upaniṣads*. Particularly it may be mentioned that some of the *R̥ṣis* of the *Chāndogya* reappear in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. The most distinguished of the *Chāndogya* *Uddālaka Āruṇi* with his son *Śvetaketu* reappear in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and so also the king *Pravāhana* in a similar context. Similarly, a considerable portion of the subject matter and ideas of the *Chāndogya* are repeated in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*; some of the passages are strikingly similar with other *Upaniṣads* for instance *Pañcāgni-vidyā* of the *Chāndogya* and some of the verses of the *Īsopaniṣad*. The *Udgītha-vidyā* of the *Chāndogya* is also repeated here. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* contains many stories and theories not only with regard to *Brahman* but other aspects of life as well.

The first chapter which contains the section called *Āra-Brāhmaṇa* emphasizes the importance of meditation whereby the man can get the result of sacrifice without actually performing it. The knowledge of *Brahman* is essential for attaining the highest bliss.

The second chapter deals with the self knowledge. Here the story of *Ajātaśatru* and proud *Bālāki* is introduced. Here we meet with *Yājñavalkya*, the distinguished teacher of the age, *Janaka*, the most philosopher king, *Maitreyī*, the most spiritually minded lady who is the wife of *Yājñavalkya*, and *Gārgī*, the most learned female who enters into a debate with *Yājñavalkya*. Here *Yājñavalkya* makes the famous declaration that there is no hope of immortality through wealth, on being asked by *Maitreyī* whether she will be immortal if the whole earth belongs to her. *Yājñavalkya* further explains to her that the knowledge of the self is the only means to attain the spiritual illumination or immortality. *Yājñavalkya* tells *Maitreyī* that "The Self should be realised, should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon": *Ātmā yā draṣṭavyā śrotavyā mantavyā nididhyāsitavyā Maitreyī ātmano*

vā are darśanena śravanena mat) ā vijñānena idam sarvam vīditam
(B.U., 2-4-5)

Here the value of meditation has been greatly emphasized and it has been pointed out that there are three-stages in the process of learning, namely, *śravaṇa* (listening to the teacher) *manana* (ratiocination) and *nīdīhyāsana* (meditation).

The third chapter relates to Yājñavalkya and the topic of the previous chapters are established with further arguments. Here we find the great discussion of Yājñavalkya in the assembly of the learned scholars of the day at the Royal Court of Janaka, the philosopher king, where Yājñavalkya proves himself to be the distinguished knower of *Brahman*.

The fourth chapter gives us the information about the debate between the Janaka and Yājñavalkya where the latter explains the nature of the three states of the self. The self is identified with the gross, subtle and causal bodies in the state of waking, dream and deep sleep respectively, called *Vaiśvānara*, *Taijasa* and *Prājña*.

The fifth chapter introduces some meditation of auxiliary nature which does not run counter to rites but confers prosperity and ultimately leads one to liberation. It prescribes three discipline, namely, *damayata*, *datta* and *dayadhvam* indicating self-control, charity and kindness, by means of a parable.

The sixth chapter introduces the classical story of Śvetaketu who goes to the court of Pravāhaṇa. The king asks him as many as five questions but Śvetaketu cannot answer any one of them. He comes back and reports to his father all that had happened at the Royal Court. The father expresses his ignorance and goes to the king to be taught by him on the problem of the next world and self. Here the teacher points out that man should be physically strong, mentally pure and spiritually sincere to achieve the highest bliss in life.

The Ideals of Upanisadic Education

What is the aim of the *Upanisadic* Education? What is the objective that the teacher tries to fulfil? Can it be said that the aim of this education is directed towards integration of personality of the pupil as an individual tending to the creation of an ideal citizen? Before discussing these facts it is necessary to consider first what the ideal or aim of *Upanisadic* instruction is. First of all, it may not be out of place to mention that it was a time when knowledge was considered as a valuable acquisition which brought to the possessor the real satisfaction to his life and it may be noticed that the instructions are imparted by and large to a class of highly trained men who are not satisfied with the popular common place teaching of day to day life, for such teaching is not adequate to satisfy their longing for attainment of the knowledge of the supra sensitive-Supreme Reality. "The ideal" says Radhakrishnan "which hunted the thinkers of the *Upanisads*, the ideal of man's ultimate beatitude, the perfection of knowledge, the vision of the Real in which the religious hunger of the mystic for divine vision and the philosopher's ceaseless quest for truth are both satisfied is still our ideal".¹

1. S. Radhakrishnan, "Introduction". *The Principal Upanisads* (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1953), p. 18.

In the *Upaniṣads*, therefore, an attempt has been made to drive home in the mind of the aspirers the truth that had been hidden so long under the popular teaching. And this truth is taught in technical terms, parables, and enigmatical statements at different times for the sake of easy comprehension.

The *Upaniṣadic* seers look at the world from a novel angle of vision. They reflect not on physical facts that exist outside themselves but on themselves and try to realise that there is a world within and therefore they turn their searchlight inward (*āṛtta cakṣuḥ*) trying to fathom the mystery of the self and immortality.

A peculiar characteristic is easily discernible in the *Upaniṣad* that its lessons are addressed to individual pupils by individual teachers. The main purpose is to treat the individual directly and the community indirectly through the individual. The ultimate aim of education is to attain final emancipation, and emancipation can be thought of only from individual point of view and it is for this reason that the teaching of the *Upaniṣads* is individual centered and not community centered. We find the individual his relation to the world and to Reality and his relation to the community is only a means to an end. Thus the *Kaṣhopeniṣad*² says .

*Yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye'sya hṛdi śritāḥ
atha martyo mṛto bhavatyatra brahma samasṇute
Yadā sarve prabhidyante hṛdayasyeḥa granthayah
atha martyo'mṛto bhavatyetāvad anuśasanam*

When all desires that dwell in human heart are given up, then the mortal becomes immortal, and obtains *Brahman*.

When all the ties of the heart are severed here on earth, then the mortal becomes immortal, here ends the teaching. The knots of the heart, which bind it to the world, are *kāma* (desire), *avidyā* (ignorance), *samśaya* (fear and doubt). In the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*³ It is declared that

*Puruṣa evedam viśvam karma tapo brahma parāmṛtam
etad yo veda nṛhitam guhāyām so'vidyāgranthum vikṛatīhasaumya*

² *Kaṣha* , 2 3 14 & 15

³ *M U* , 2 1 10 2 2 9

*bhidṛate hṛdaya-granthiśchidyante sarvasaṁsayaḥ
ksīyante cāśya karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣṭe parāṇare*

"The person himself is all this, work, austerity and *Brahman* beyond death. He who knows that which is set in the secret place (of the heart), he, here on earth, O beloved cuts asunder the knot of ignorance.

"The knot of the heart is cut, all doubts are dispelled and his deeds terminate, when He is seen - the higher and the lower" (Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's translation).

All the knots can be finally cut when the individual self or *Jñātmā* loses itself in the vision of the Supreme Self *Paramātmā*. In the *Chāndogya*⁴, Sanatkumāra thus instructs Nārada.

*na paśyo mṛtyum paśyati na rogaṁ na duḥkhatām
sarvaṁ ha paśyah paśyati sarvaṁāpnoti sarvaśaḥ*

He who sees this does not see death, nor sickness nor any distress. He who sees this sees all things and obtains all things in all ways.

Lanman says "The great practical aim of all the teaching (of the Upaniṣads) is, by exterminating in the soul all desires and activity, root and branch, to lead to the realisation of the unity of the soul and the Supreme Soul. This realised it is liberated; and death can only do away with what no longer exists for the emancipated soul, the last false semblance of a difference between itself and the Supreme"⁵.

We have already noticed that the *Upaniṣadic* teachers usually live in hermitages or penance-groves not far removed from the towns or from the life of people in towns and villages. These forest hermitages are the centres of learning where the children of the rich and the poor live together under the same roof in a very simple manner. The sons of the peer along with the sons of commoners serve their *guru* equally and beg alms for their daily food. The students regard their teachers

4 C.U., 7.25.2

5. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Association* Vol. XXI p. XIV as quoted by J. N. Rawson in his *Kaṭha Upeśiṣad* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 207

as *vidyācāryas* or spiritual parents and render him upgrudged service. The forest institutions are residential Universities where the students live in the house of the teachers, perform the prescribed duties and observe sacred vows. The training comprises physical, moral and spiritual discipline. They cannot think of complaining of their life of self-restraint and privations. They willingly undergo the training and thus attain all-round success in their educational career now and could solve the problems of life in their would be life of householder. The ideal is to forego luxury and material comforts now in order to get real happiness hereafter by way of investment.

The basic ideals of the institution of the *gurukulas* and *āśramas* is to afford opportunity for the intimate contact of teacher and their taught, a contact of mind with mind and spirit with spirit which no other agency can serve as a substitute or equivalent. So far as the importance of the *gurukula* system of education is concerned the remark made by Dr. Altekar is worth quoting "Direct, personal and continuous contact with a teacher of noble character naturally produces great effect on the mind of the scholar during the pliable period of childhood and adolescence. The close association with elderly scholars, who had made progress in education and won the applause of their teachers, naturally induces the new entrants to emulate their example. The invisible yet all-pervading influence of established traditions of the institution naturally spurs the student to identify himself with them".⁶ It is an established fact that education can flourish only in an atmosphere where mutual cooperation and understanding among the teacher and the taught prevails. Education cannot be regarded as a passive, mechanical, or one sided process, it means rather a joint enterprise among the fellow learners. The reverence on the part of the pupil and the affection on the part of the teacher which brings about a cordial relationship between the teacher and the student is largely responsible for the success of education in these residential type of schools.

Another notable feature of the education of ancient India is that it "Spread downwards; it was not built up from

6. Dr. A.S. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, rev & enl 3rd ed. (Benares : Nanda Kishore & Bros, 1948), p. 32

below. Indian civilisation was a product of the country not of the town, of the forest not of the city"⁷.

In the *Vedic* age the forest is as it were the powerhouse of wisdom from which the light of knowledge radiates far and wide throughout the country. The forest life affords the opportunity to the student to come in direct contact with nature, contributing to the development of a receptive frame of mind. Rabindranath Tagore remarks, "The current of civilization that flowed from its forests inundated the whole of India"⁸.

The aim of the *gurukula* system of education is directed towards the purity and solemnity of life and to instil into the minds of the pupil the spirit of self-help, self-sacrifice, devotion to duty and reverence for the elders. The religious fervour and the reverential personality of the teacher exercise a direct influence in creating a healthy spiritual mood in the minds of the youngsters. Says Dr. Ramaswami Aiyar, "It would be correct to say that these ancient Hindu schools of learning, which ultimately developed into what might be described as forest Universities, pursued a mode of teaching which was neither mechanical nor soulless but which generated in the learners a spirit of anxious enquiry and a quest for truth".⁹

Thus it is crystal clear that the aim of education is to encourage both moral and spiritual interest of the young enlightened and the society associated with them to attain the spiritual kingdom. The true aim of the *Upanisadic* education can be realised from the constantly recurring prayer invoked in relation to persons engaged in the quest of knowledge and of the Self: the teacher and the taught jointly pray that

*saha nāvatu,
saha nau bhunaktu,
saha vīryam karavāmah,*

7. Annie Besant, *Indian Ideals*, (Calcutta - University of Calcutta 1925. *Kamala Lectures*. 1925), p. 25

8. *Visva Bharati Quarterly*, April, 1924, p. 64

9. Dr C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, *Indian Universities*, (Annamalai : Annamalai University, 1964), p. 39

*tejasvi nāvadhītam astu,
mā vidviṣāvaḥ!*¹⁰

May the supreme protect us, may He afford us daily sustenance, may we be given strength and valour for joint enterprises, may our studies be illustrious and crowned with success, and above all, may there be no hatred and jealousy amongst persons following the same path¹¹

A slight probing into this prayer will make man appreciate that there can be no other satisfactory and complete objectives of education as have been disclosed here in this message of the *Upanisadic* seers. These are the true purposes of gathering of pupils and teachers, disciples and preceptors.

The teacher and the student try to build up the intellectual republic which might help them in retaining their fellow feeling unto the last and develop a keen sense of unity for the achievement of their aspiration. The aim of education is to refine outer and inner life of the individual for the development of his moral, spiritual and intellectual life and to spread the light of knowledge in the right direction. From the invocation verse cited above it can be clearly seen that several aims of education are postulated here which can be briefly discussed and evaluated.

(a) The protection of self (*saha nāvatu*) is the first postulate of the aim of education. The primary function of the education is to look into the fundamental question concerning human existence. Education should give us strength to protect us from undesirable impluses and wastage of energies. It should also give us strength to overcome all sorts of trials and tribulations of life, to solve its pestering problems and to face the stern realities of life with ease. It requires selfcontrol to generate the sense of self respect, self reliance and self-security, security of self ensures successful existence.

¹⁰ *Koṭha*, 1

¹¹ The translation is of Dr Cⁿ Ramaswami Aiyar *Indian Universities*, p. 31

Education should aim at bringing about economic well-being by the motto (*Saha nau bhūmaktu*) and to drive out stress and poverty from our society leading to the welfare of the state. Let us all live peacefully in the society by resorting to some means of economic efficiency according to our tradition. Social efficiency depends largely on economic efficiency. Education should prepare an individual for a useful profession for driving out poverty from the society.

The *Upanisadic* seers did not deny or repudiate the economic needs of man, but deliberately set a limit beyond which economic needs should not go. Instead of hankering after more and more of worldly goods, they devoted themselves—once the basic requirements of life were met—to the development of a life of intellectual, moral and spiritual culture ¹².

(c) Cultivation of physical competence as embodied in the phrase (*saha vīryam karavīhazī*) is another basic postulate of the aim of education. The *Upanisadic* seers are fully aware of the fact that physical efficiency is the corner stone of a complete and successful life. Physical fitness can never stand a man in good stead if it is bereft of mental strength. Hence in the following part of the invocation, it is prayed for

(d) (*tejasvi nāvadhītam astu*) i.e. may our study be charged with strength and illumination. This prayer purports to acquisition of mental strength and illumination caused by study of sacred lore. Knowledge is the greatest strength of human beings. It has been declared in the *Taittirīya Upanisad* also as

“Yuvā syāt sādhu yuvādhyāyakah aśīṣṭho dṛḍhisṭho
Valīṣṭhah, taryeyam pṛthivī sarvā vittasya pūrnā syāt”.

“Let the young man, during his tutelage be a good student, diligent in his studies, disciplined in mind, firm of purpose and strong in body. To such a student comes the wealth of the world in abundance”¹³.

12 Humayun Kabir, *Indian Philosophy of Education* (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1964), p 185

13 Transliteration of Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. *Indian Universities* p. 60

The *Upaniṣadic* seers go to the extent of declaring boldly that the knowledge of the Absolute is not attainable by those who are not strong in body, mind and spirit ‘

*Nāyam ātmā valahīnena labhyaḥ*¹⁴

This self cannot be won by any who is without strength Weakness, lethargy and negligence are to be purged in order to enter the kingdom of higher knowledge

All these lead us to think that great emphasis is laid on acquisition of healthy physique, firmness of mind and disciplined will force Observes Dr Ramaswami, “There was a wise insistence upon the cultivation of a strong body as much as on firmness of purpose and the discipline of the will, the latter qualities depending, to no small extent on healthy physique The student was enjoined to make himself not only a diligent student, but an *Āśiṣṭha* and *Valiṣṭha*, disciplined and strong”¹⁵

The *Upaniṣadic* seers stress time and again on the need of acquiring strength, physical, mental and spiritual to realise the supreme goal of life

(e) The development of personality is another notable postulate of the aim of education The object of education is to bring out the dormant qualities of intelligence, the rational insight and other intellectual and moral virtues to illumine the mind of the people The development of the qualities of head and heart is the constituent element of the formation of personality Pupils feel and think thus—we should have that education which can illumine our mind and crown our life with success Let our study be effective and let us be illustrious by diffusing the light of knowledge to dispel the darkness of ignorance

(f) The last but the unique postulate is to acquire the spirit of tolerance This postulate is no doubt based on the Hindu view of life The true ideal of education is the liberation of mind from jealousy and hatred, the elimination of the feeling of pettiness, narrowness and selfishness from the human

¹⁴ M U. 3 2 4

¹⁵ Dr C.P Ramaswami Aiyar, *Indian Universities*, pp 45 6

mind is what may be called the true end of education. The *Upanisadic* seer further declares

“*sā vidyā jā vimuktaye*”

That is learning which liberates the human mind. ‘The liberation of the human mind to which this concept refers’, says Dr. Gajendragadkar, ‘is the liberation of the human mind from pettiness, narrowness and subversiveness’¹⁶. The real need of education is to prepare the man to be capable of conquering the narrowness of mind to elevate his feelings and ideas progressively higher until the highest is reached. Education is not regarded as a mere process of transmission of information but as a means to make human mind broader, richer, more compassionate and more society oriented. Unselfish love, compassion and impartiality are the conditions precedent to intellectual salvation. The aim of education is to prepare a man to lead a complete or intergrated life in the society and not to nurture a split personality. “The prayer which was to be recited at the beginning of the study of the *Upanisads*” observes Kabir, “expresses clearly and unequivocally the demand for an education which would satisfy all elements in man’s nature and help him to develop as a harmonious and integrated personality.

May my limbs (*aṅga*), organ of speech (*vāk*), vitality (*prāṇa*), eye (*cakṣus*), ears (*śrotra*), strength (*bala*) and all other organs (*indriyas*) be nourished and perfected; all these are means to the realisation of the Infinite, May I not deny the Great one and may not the Great one forsake me. May I acquire those virtues which reside in a person devoted to *Upanisadic* studies”¹⁷.

Education is regarded as a life-long process; life is growth; anything which ceases to grow is bound to decay and wither away. A man claiming to be alive should continue his study and teaching throughout the life. The *Upanisadic* seers

16 Dr. P.B. Gajendragadkar, *Convocation Address*, (Gauhati : Gauhati University, 1970), p. 10

17. Humayun Kabir, *Indian Philosophy of Education* (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 177 *vide also kenopaniṣad* invocation verse.

hold the view that without the twin qualities of studying and teaching the life of a man can never be complete. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says

**ṛtani ca svādhyāya pravacane ca, satyam ca svādhyāya pravacane ca mānuṣam ca svādhyāya pravacane ca, prajā ca svādhyāya pravacane ca*

Justice, truth, austerity, self control, tranquillity, sacrifice, domestic duties, the attention to the guests and the obligation to the society are adverted to, but to these must be added the function of the teacher and the student as necessary supplement.

Education is not complete by itself, it must be supplemented by study and teaching throughout life. Inquiry and experience are the life of culture as well as of the law. All the conflicts can be resolved only where there is freedom to inquire and to expound (*svādhyāya pravacana*) to make the journey of life successful. It is, therefore, clear that life without the pursuit both of study and of exposition will remain as incomplete and ineffective as ever.

It was in the light of these objectives of education that the preceptor gives the final instruction or, to use a modern term, delivers the convocation address (*samuvartan*) to the disciples (*antevāsin*) who are going to leave the preceptors' abode or residential institution on the completion of their academic career. In the convocation address the preceptor enjoins upon the disciple to face the problems of life and to devote themselves to the service of the community now that their schooling is over. In fact, the instructions given by the preceptor to his disciples in the parting message are equally relevant and valid in the context of present day society as well. The eleventh *anuvāka* of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* contains a short, simple but comprehensive convocation address which runs as follows

Vedamānucyacārya'ntevāsināmamiśāstī, satyam vada dharmaṁ cara, svādhyāyānmaṁ pramadati ācāryāya priyam [dhanam] āhṛtiḥ prajātāntu mā vyavacchetsiḥ satyānaṁ pamaditāryant

dharmānna pramaditavyam kuśālānna pramaditavyam, bhūtya na pramaditavyam, svādhyāyapravaçanābhyām na pramaditavyam, deva-pitṛ-kāryabhyām na pramaditavyam.

mātrdevo bhava, pitṛdevo bhava, ācāryadevo bhava, atithi-devo bhava, yānyanavadyāni karmāṇi, tāni sevītavyāni, no itarāṇi yānyasmākaṁ sucaritāṁ, tāni trayopāśyāni, no itarāṇi.

ve ke cāsmacchreyāṁso brāhmaṇāḥ, teṣāṁ trayāsanena praśvaśitavyam, śraddhayā deyam, aśraddhayā deyam, śriyā deyam, hrīyā devam, bhīyā deyam, saṁvidā deyam.

atha yadi te karma-vicikitsā vā vṛttavicikitsā vā syāt ye tatra brāhmaṇāḥ sammarśinaḥ, yuktāḥ āyuktāḥ alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ, yathā te tetra varteran, tathā tatra vartethāḥ.

athābhyākhyateṣu ye tatra brāhmaṇāḥ sammarśinaḥ yuktā āyuktāḥ, alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ, yathā te teṣu varteran, tathā teṣu vartethāḥ.

eṣa ādeśaḥ, eṣa upadeśaḥ, eṣa vedopaniṣat, etadānuśāsanam evamupāśitavyam, evamu caitadupāśyam.

After having taught the *Veda* the preceptor thus instructs, the disciple.

satyaṁ vada, dhamam cara, svādhyāyānmā pramadaḥ. Speak the truth, practise virtue or follow the path of duty. Never neglect your obligation to the daily recitation of the *Vedas* i.e., your study. This piece of advice has again been impressed upon the minds of the students in a negative form:

satyānna pramaditavyam dharmānna pramaditavyam, kuśālānna pramaditavyam.

You must not deviate from the path of truth, from the path of duty and from the path of well-being.

Thus the preceptor demands of the departing student adherence to the path of truth, the performance of duty and sustained practice of daily study in the next order of life following student life and active participation in public good.

The word *satya* is derived from the root *as* to be, *sattāyām* means existing¹ and '*satya*' means 'conducive to

existence' i.e. the quality which is essential for existence. It has been said '*satyam viśvasya jagataḥ pratiṣṭhā*', Truth is the stay of the whole universe. The Hindu scriptures lay great emphasis on our being truthful. Truth is identified with *ṛta* or moral order '*vaḍ va ṛtum tat satyam*'. In the *Śatapatha Brahmana*¹⁸, it has been said to be the only *Vrata* observed by the gods.

ekam ha vai dayāmau curanti yat satyam tasmāt satyameva vadet '

In the same *Brahmana*¹⁹ '*satya*' has again been identified with '*dharma*'

*yo vai dharmah satyam vai tat
tasmāt satyam vadantam ahur dharmam va datiti dharmam vā
vadantam satyam vadatiti*

That which is '*dharma*' is indeed 'truth'. Hence people say of a man who is speaking the truth, he is speaking '*dharma*' or one who is speaking '*dharma*' is speaking the truth.

In the *Bṛhadaranyaka*²⁰ also truth has been identified with '*dharma*'

*yo vai sa dharmah satyam vai tat
tasmāt satyam vadantamahur
dharmam vadatiti dharmam va vadantam
satyam vadatiti*

What is '*dharma*' is indeed 'truth'. Hence people say of one speaking what is true that he speaks what is '*dharma*' or of one speaking what is '*dharma*', that he speaks what is true. In the *Prasnopaniṣad*²¹ it is said '*samūlo vā eṣa pariśuṣṭi jati yo nṛtamabhinadati*'

Further in the same *Upaniṣad*²² it is declared '*teṣāme va sa brahmaloka yeṣāṃ tपो brahmacāryam yeṣu satyam pratiṣṭhitam*'. They indeed possess that *Brahma* world who possess austerity and chastity in whom truth is established²³

18 *Śa Brā* 14.1.1.33

19 *Phil* 14.2.2.26

20 *B U* 1.4.14

21 *Prasna* 6

22 *Ib id* 1.16

23 *For satya* cf. *M U* 3.1.5 & 6 *Kena* 11.8

The story of Satyakāma-Jābāla in the *Chāndogya*²⁴ clearly proves that truth is regarded as the highest virtue by the *Vedic-Aryans* in general and *Upansadic* seers in particular.

The exhortation to speak the truth, therefore, finds the first preference over all other obligations in the above quoted convocation address. The importance of the path of truth has been brought to our notice further in a negative way with a view to stressing that even unwittingly or through carelessness we may not depart from it.

One must be true in every respect, in thought, in word and action and even through carelessness one should not deviate from that path. The path of truth referred to here is, therefore, not merely the path of speaking verbal truth but has a deeper significance. 'Satya' or 'truth' in the context of the convocation address, says Dr. Gajendragadkar 'took within its sweep a much broader and much more constructive concept.

"jad bhūtahitam etyetam etad satyam matam mama"

That which leads to the largest good of the largest number is truth. It will thus be seen that the truth of which the Chancellor spoke in addressing the graduates in ancient days was social truth. Tenets and beliefs and modes of conduct and behaviour—individual and social which led to the largest good of the largest number, were included in the concept of truth; and the injunction to the graduate was that from such truth, he must never depart"²⁵.

. In '*dharmaṁ cara*' the word *dharma* means duty in general and not merely religious injunctions. Though the word *dharma* is identical with '*satya*' as we have noticed under '*satyam vada*' still its the separate mention indicates some other significance in this context. Lord Manu has described *dharma* as

24. C.U., 4-4-4

25. Dr. P B Gajendragadkar, *Convocation Address* (Osmania : Osmania University, 1967). p 2

*dhṛtiḥ kṣamā damo'steyam saucamindriya-nigrahaḥ
dānāśīlā satyamakrodho daśakam dharmalakṣaṇam* (6-8!).

Contentment, forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity, sense-control, wisdom, knowledge, truthfulness and control of anger—these ten constitute *dharma*. We find mention has been made of all the duties and moral virtues of a man. None-the-less, great importance has been put on self-control directly and indirectly. In fact control over senses, body, mind and thought is the sine-qua-non of success in life. The self-control is referred to here by the term *dharma* which the preceptor demands of the disciple to observe throughout his life. Thus says the *Vaṣiṣṭha-smṛiti*

*"brāhmaṇasya tu deho'yaṁ nopabhaḡāya kalpate
iḥa kleśāya mahate pretyānantasukhyāya ca"*

This body of *Brāhmaṇa* is not intended for enjoying sense-pleasure. It has to be made subject to strict discipline here which will contribute to manifold joys after death. From this it can be inferred that a man can know and realise *Brahman* here in this life itself by the observance of the two fold *dharma*s of the nature of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* as mentioned in the *Laṣṭha-upaniṣad*. Thus the *Upaniṣad* requires man to choose the good and realise it by constant and conscious effort.

The word '*dharma*' in the context of the convocation address mentioned earlier has been used in the sense of all social duties or obligations in order to make the social order stable and progressive. "*dhāraṇāt dharmamityāhuḥ*", so says the *Mahābhārata*. The *śruti* says, "*dharmā viśvāsa jagataḥ pratiṣṭhā dharmena pāpamāpanudati*".

Dharma is the foundation of the entire universe, one gets rid of sin by *dharma*.

The supreme object of man which is of the form of attainment of joy and the avoidance of sorrow can be secured by *dharma*. It is said, *dharaṇāt dharmah; dhṛyate aṛena iṣi vā dīharmah*, the society is supported by this, hence it is called *dharma*. That *dharma* is the cause of the stability of the Universe is affirmed by the *śruti*.

Therefore that which sustains social structure stable and contributes to its progress is 'dharma'. The preceptor advises the parting disciple not to depart from such course of conduct in life to maintain social order, happiness and prosperity.

'Kusala' or 'welfare of the society' the teacher impressed upon the minds of the students that they should never deviate from the path of doing what is good to the society. The students of to-day will be the citizen of to-morrow and in his life as a citizen he is expected to contribute to social welfare. "It would thus be seen, observes Dr. Gajendragadkar, "that when the ancient graduates left the portals of the universities and faced the question mark of life, they were told to remember that as a citizen of the country, as members of a community, it was their duty to assist the process of social progress and social development. In other words, the idea of learning, in ancient days, was not a negative or passive idea. Scholarship did not like to live in an ivory tower in those days. Scholarship regarded itself as an instrument of social service, and in that sense the graduates were asked to behave in accordance with the best traditions of scholarship".²⁶

The necessity of study and teaching (*svādhāya prabacānābhyām na pramaditavyam*) and the performance of the duties to gods and the ancestors (*deva pitṛ-kāryābhyām na pramaditavyam*) and the perpetuation of the family (*prajātantum mā vyavacchetsih*) is impressed upon the disciples as social obligation to be performed in their after life.

It is said that as soon as a man is born, he is under a debt to gods, the ancestors and the sages. He should, therefore, direct all his attention to make himself free from all these debts. So says the *śruti*

*jāyamāno ha vai brāhmaṇaḥ tribhir ṛṇa vā
jāyate brahmacāryeṇaṣṭibhyah yajñena devebhyah
prajāyā pitṛbhyah esa vā anṛṇi jah putro yajvā brahmacārī*²⁷.

26. Dr. P B. Gajendragadkar, *Convocation Address*, (Osmania: Osmania University, 1967), pp. 23

27. *Taittirīya Samhitā*, 6-3-10

The *Smṛti* texts also echo the same injunction and we meet with such statements as—

*ṛnam devasya jagena ṛṣinam pūṣhakarmana
santayā pitṛlokānam śodhayitvā parivrajat*

One can pay off his debt to the gods, ancestors and to the sages by the performance of sacrifices, the propagation of the family and the study of the *Vedas* respectively. He must discharge his obligation to the gods, to the sages and to his ancestors before he is entitled to renounce the world.

By this injunction the teacher impressed upon the students who is going to enter into family life or the *grhasthaśrama* to consider them as social obligation to be performed carefully and attentively for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the society. These are essential attributes for the growth, development and cultural progress of the society. For the preservation of the cultural heritage and to perpetuate the memory of our forefathers we should not allow our line of progeny to be cut off. It is incumbent on us to show our gratitude to the ancient seers by studying and expounding the knowledge handed down from generation to generation, and to transmit it to our posterity to maintain its perennial flow for ages to come. Thus the state of house-holder is spoken of from one perspective as the highest stage with so many obligations to perform and marriage is as a rule compulsory for all students who come back from the forest academy to their paternal abodes. Education essentially aimed at preparing the individual to discharge all these three debts and free himself from social obligations.

According to *Sanātana Dharmaśāstras* marriage is not looked upon as a mere contract or partnership. It is not a passport to unbridled sexual enjoyment or sheer worldly enjoyment. Marriage is a sacrament. It inculcates in man the sense of social responsibility, self help and self restraint. The very fact that wife is termed *sahadharmini* and the etymological import of the word *patni* (one who helps her husband in discharging religious vows) drives home the truth that marriage

is a sacred institution which has a holy sanction. Wife is looked upon not as a means of carnal gratification but as the mother of the race and perpetuatress of the family.

In this connection mention may be made further that the pursuit of wealth and happiness is an eternal aspiration of the human being and therefore one should not be blind but alive to the importance of both and never be negligent in promoting one's wellbeing *kuśalānna pramaditavyam* or acquiring prosperity by [all] legitimate means. An honest means of attaining prosperity in life of the member of the society promotes the welfare of the community. The teacher wanted the students to be respectful to mother, father and the teacher and be hospitable to the guest. The entertainment of guest is considered to be one of the five *mahāyajñas* called *nṛyajña* which is required to be performed by a householder daily. It is said

*adhyayanam brahmayajñah pitṛyajñastu tarpaṇam
homo dāvo valirbhauto nṛyajño 'tithipñjanam.*

(Manu. 3-70)

By this the teacher enjoined on the students to harbour respect and charity in mind. This raises a man from the narrow groove of selfishness to a selfless stature. Unselfish motive is essential for social welfare.

One of the most important pieces of advice is that the disciple must always do what is above reproach and must never do that which is objectionable and censurable. Thus pure conduct and good behaviour are enjoined. Śaṅkara remarks

*vānyapi cānyāni anavadyāni anīditāni śiṣṭācāralakṣaṇāni
karmāni tāni sevītavyāni karttavyāni tvayā, na na karttavyāni
ītarāni sāvadyāni śiṣṭakṛtanyapi* (T.U., 1-11-2)

The training of character and spiritual culture is to be achieved along with all relationship with the life of work at home. One of the essential instructions is to help the poor out of sympathy for suffering humanity. The householder's wealth is not for the selfish enjoyment, but for securing the welfare of all.

It was the aim of education to equip the student properly so that he may be an ideal citizen with the conviction that one and the same spirit pervades all beings. Swami Vivekananda observes: 'The end of all education all training should be man making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow'.²⁸ Dr Mahadevan remarks: 'Man is not a mixture of elements without an inner coherence. What provides the inner coherence is spirit of self. Man is essentially spirit, with mind, life and body as lower possessions or appearances. In other words, body, life and mind are progressive approximations to spirit which alone is the essence of man as well as of the universe. It is this supreme truth which is proclaimed by the *Upaniṣad* text that says

puruṣānna param kincit sa kaṣṭha sa paru gatih

* Higher than the *Puruṣa* there is nothing that is the end that is the final goal. Commenting on this text *Śaṅkara* observes:

There is nothing other than or superior to the *Puruṣa* which is the pure consciousness, it is the final limit and goal of all that is subtle, great and inward.

*Yasmānnāsti puruṣaccinnatraghanat param kincidapī
vastāntaram tasmāt sukṣmatvamahatva - pratyagatmativā ūm
sa kaṣṭhā niṣṭha parjayaśānam* (*Śaṅkara on Kaṣṭha* 1.3.11)

If the whole man is *Puruṣa* then it is clear that the supreme aim of education should be to enable the individual to discover *Puruṣa*.²⁹ Education is the instrument which can enable the individual to transcend all mundane experiences and attain the Absolute which is the true, the beautiful and good.

There can be no better aim of education than to proclaim: *asato ma sa jagamaya, tamaso ma jyotirgamaya, mṛtyor na anātam gamaya*.³⁰

Let our education lead us from unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

28. Complete work of Swami Vivekananda vol. 7. Mayavati memorial ed. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1932) p. 15.

29. Report on the National Seminar on the place of spiritual values in Education, 1963 (Coimbatore: Dr. Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalyaya) p. 46.

30. p. 11, 13, 28.

Tha System of Education in the Upanisads

The *Upanisads* are the main spring of the rich cultural heritage of India. In boldness of speculation, clarity of conception, beauty of exposition the *Upanisads* are the distilled product of human brain. The contribution of the *Upanisads* to the religious thought of India can never be overestimated. Their contribution to the field of education is no less important and exalted.

The term *Upanisad* itself signifies education received by the students sitting round their teacher from the derivation of the word as *Upa* (near) *ni* (down) *sad* (to sit) - *kṛip*, wh ch means 'sitting down of a pupil at the feet of his teacher for being educated'. The term *Upanisad* is however explained by different scholars in different ways.

Max Muller says that the term *Upaniṣad* is used in the sense of a secret doctrine and that the same name is given to the literature containing such doctrine. In support of this view mention may be made of certain passages from some *Upanisads*:

1. *Ya imam paramam guhyam śrāṇayed brahma-samsad.*
2. *Vedānte paramam guhyam purākalpe pracoditam.*
3. *Te vā ete guhya ādeśa.....*
4. *Vedaguhyopanisatsu gudham.*

1. *Kaṭha* 13 17

2. *S U*, 6-22

3. *C. U*, 3 5 2

4. *S. U*, 5 6

Deussen suggests that the term *Upaniṣad* firstly means 'sitting near', and then an assembly. He says, "for *Upaniṣad*, derived as a substantive from the root *sad*, to sit, can only denote a "sitting"; and as the preposition *upa* (nearby) indicates, in contrast to *pariśad*, *samsad* (assembly), a 'confidential secret sitting', we must assume, even if actual proof is wanting that this name for 'secret sitting' was used also in course of time to denote the purpose of this sitting i.e. 'secret instruction'. According to him *Upaniṣad* means that the students sat near their teachers and received instruction on deep philosophical ideas or an assembly where learned men met together and discussed them; the whole account then came to be known under the common name of *Upaniṣad*. It may be mentioned that *Upaniṣad* is not used in the sense of an 'assembly' in the body of the *Upaniṣads*.

Oldenberg traces the word *Upaniṣad* to *Upāsana* which means 'adoration' i.e. 'reverential meditation on the *Brahman* or *Ātman*, and the word is to be derived from *Upa* - as 'to sit before some one or something in adoration'. But the difference between *as* and *sad* is apparent, for, in case of *as* (to worship) it is applicable only to one person engaged in worship of his god and never to approach for instruction. In fact the *Upaniṣadic* teachers were less concerned with the magnitude and dimensions of the worship of gods and were preparing the ground for self-introspection.

According to Ācārya Śaṅkara the celebrated commentator of the principal *Upaniṣads* the term 'means that knowledge which destroys all wordly ties and leads the students to *Brahman*' for he takes 'sad' in the sense of 'to destroy'. Precisely he means to say that which destroys the ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit and cutting off the bonds of *avidyā* which is the cause of *samsāra* and hence it

5. Paul Deussen - *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣad* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1972), p. 13

6. *Ibid*, p. 13

comes to mean the knowledge of *Brahman* and for this reason *Upaniṣad* is also called *Brahma-Vidyā*. Thus he explains the term first in the introduction to his commentary on the *Kaṣha-Upaniṣad*⁷ and secondly in the introduction to his commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*⁸. He says *Upaniṣad* leads to the acquisition of the knowledge of *Brahman*. Knowledge (of *Brahman*) is referred to by the word *Upaniṣad* for it either loosens or ends such things as birth, old age, etc., for those who are devoted to it or because it takes one near *Brahman*. Śaṅkara further suggests that the word *Upaniṣad* means something in which the highest good is embodied.

Upaniṣannam vā aśyām param śreyah iti upaniṣad

The term *Upaniṣad* is actually a shortened form of the full word *Vedopaniṣad* which is often overlooked and it does not merely mean faith alone. In the *Chāndogya* it is stated that

*Yadeva vidyayā karoti śraddhayopaniṣadā tadeva vīryamait-
aram bhavati*⁹.

whatever is done with knowledge, faith and meditation, that becomes more effective.

The derivation of the word *Upaniṣad* from *Upa-ni* (to go over) and *sad* (to remain) can be supported by a comparison with *svādhyāya*

'ā mā jantu brahmacūrinah'.....

again *'eṣā vedopaniṣat'*.

'Let students for the course come to me'. This is the secret of the *Vedas* and eventually *Upaniṣads* means 'the secret meaning

7. *Saderdhātorvīśaranogasyaśādanārthasya upanipurvāsya kvip
pratyayāntasya rūpamudam, 'upaniṣat, iti upaniṣecchāvdena ca
vyācikyāśīta grantha pratipādyavedya vastuvijayā vidyocayte
, param brahma gamayati iti.*

8. *upanīṣadīti vidyocayate, tacchīlinam garbha janma jarādiniśā
tanāṁ, tadavasādanādāvā brahmana upanigamayitvat upaniṣannam
vā aśyām param śreyah iti.*

9 C. U., 1 1-10

and deep import of the text received from the residential study under a teacher¹⁰.

In the *Upaniṣad* we find that the grandeur of external world once stirred the imagination of the *Vedic Rṣis* could no longer attract the minds of the *Rṣis* of the *Upaniṣadic* age. They are deeply impressed with mysteries of the inner world. They have practically lost all attraction, faith and interest in the *Vedic* sacrificial rites and rituals and diverted their attention from without to within. They were no longer contemplating on the things outside themselves but they began to reflect on themselves. They began to look at the world from a new angle of vision. Their mind is no longer absorbed in the physical objects, in any outside god, or worldly pleasure which will perish sooner or later, but in the divine nature of a man, the god within and in solving the problem of the universe by way of explaining the fundamental relation of man to nature and God. The *Rṣis* of the *Upaniṣads* constantly speak of God as *Ātman*, the indwelling spirit.

They identify human soul as the manifestation of the Universal soul, namely, the *Brahman*. *Ātman* becomes the God Universal and its union with *Brahman* becomes the ultimate object of their aspiration. This wonderful and varied universe appears to them as one undivided whole and the underlying essence of all is the universal Spirit. In fact they begin to look upon the visible world as an illusion or appearance and upon *Brahman* as the *Ultimate Reality*. They begin to engage themselves in deep meditation instead of oral prayer and this takes place as a natural consequence of the awakening of spiritual consciousness in them. They preach all through that *Brahman* can be realised through prayer, worship, speculation and meditation.

The *Upaniṣadic Rṣi* of firm conviction and true love implores his God with earnest zeal for visualisation and learns to meditate under the guidance of some *guru*; on realisation of

the *Ultimate Reality* he likes to be one with it and forgets the physical world including his own self.

The *Upaniṣads* reveal to us an age of intense intellectual unrest. Questions of profound significance begin to occupy the minds of the thinking people and, as a result, a high standard of culture is attained. A band of outstanding teachers are making their appearance and are scattered throughout the *Aryan* world. They relinquish all earthly comfort and worldly glamour and resort to the lives of the hermit and devote themselves to the study of the deeper problems of life, the individual *Ātman* and its union with the *Brahman*, life after death, emancipation of the self and final beatitude. The thinkers were earnest in their search for truth and they were ready to reject the conclusion once arrived at, if found inadequate in the light of further and subtler speculation. Aspirants from far and near would repair to them for enlightenment and spend years and some of them e.g. the *naiṣṭhikas* even the whole life in their company as members of their family. A system of education was thus evolved and lasted for centuries of which successive generation took advantage of and the content of the educational system can be described in nutshell as the direct experience and realisation of the universal spirit—the all-pervading Light by the disciple under the care and guidance of his *guru* which is picturesquely described in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹¹ as

asato mā sadgamaya
tamaso mā jyotirgamaya
mṛtyor mā amṛtam gamaya

from the unreality lead me to the reality, from darkness lead me to the light, from death lead me to the immortality. Eventually the *Upaniṣadic* teachers defined education as

‘sā vidyā jā vimuktaye’

Education is that which leads to the liberation of the human mind. This is how they defined education and its validity can be testified at every stage of *Upaniṣadic* education.

Man can solve his problem, both practical and spiritual, with the help of education alone. Education was regarded as an instrument of solving the problems and liberating the human mind from ignorance. So it has been said

'vidya vimokṣaya vibhakti kevala'

The *Upanisadic* teachers contributed not only the findings of their experience and spiritual researches to enrich the cultural heritage but also engaged themselves for further transmission of knowledge of the rising generation so that the perennial flow of culture and civilisation might continue unhindered. Education consists in transmission of culture to the learning generation by teachers. * There is no denying the fact that it was the educational system which was largely responsible for achieving the highest altitude of culture and civilisation in ancient India, the legacy of which is and will be enlightening and enduring for ages to come.

The *Upaniṣads* furnish us with a glorious picture of educational system that prevailed in ancient India.

The system of education is known as the *gurukula* system which is still considered to be one of the major contribution of Indian civilization to the world of education. There are two notable features of the system which have made it unique, the first being the type of instruction imparted and the second, the method of instruction adopted. The combination of these two made the system ever memorable and inspiring. The *Upanisadic* seers made no distinction between philosophy of life and philosophy of education. They considered them both to be co-ordinated and co-related. They converted the *gurukula* into a higher institution of educational experiment, intellectual speculation and research.

The values which inspired the philosophy of education in ancient India according to Dr. Kabir¹² were

12. Humayun Kabir, *Indian Philosophy of Education* (Bombay Asia Publishing House 1964) p. 186.

(a) the quest for liberation of the individual from the bondage of evil. Evil is a denial of the good and arises out of ignorance ; the seers of ancient India were not afraid of living dangerously in thought and action. Their example, even more than their precept, inspired their pupils.

(b) tolerance and forbearance, which arose out of respect for life and the recognition that ultimately all individuals are manifestation or moments of the *Brahman*.

(c) the principle of disinterested devotion (*niskāma bhakti*) arising directly from the striving for freedom from limitation, and the regard for individuality.

The educational philosophy of a people will depend on its concept of man and the values which it considers worthy of human pursuit¹³.

'The *Upanisad*', says Swami Ranganathananda, 'conceived education as training in clearness of vision, in purity and strength of will, and in richness and stability of the emotion'.¹⁴

To this institution came the students with earnest inquiry to find a solution to their problems and an unquenchable thirst for attaining the knowledge par excellence.

'The recognition of', observes Dr. Altekar, 'the importance of association and imitation was one of the main reasons for the great emphasis laid on the *gurukula* system. Direct, personal and continuous contact with a teacher of noble character naturally produce great effect on the mind of the scholar during the pliable period of childhood and adolescence. The close association with elderly scholars, who had made progress in education and won the applause of their teachers, naturally induces the new entrants to emulate their example. The invisible yet all pervading influence of established traditions

13. Humayun Kabir · *Indian Philosophy of Education* (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 168 169

14. Swami Ranganathananda, *The Message of the Upanisads* 2nd ed (Bombay Bharat-ā Vidyā Bhavan, 1971), p 266

of the institution naturally spurs the student to identify himself with them¹⁵.

Thus the student in the *gurukula* got the opportunity of moulding his life and character after the idealistic pattern of his teacher's life by living in close association with him. The close and constant association with the teacher in the *gurukula* made it possible for the student to assimilate all the noble traits which have traditionally served as the guiding force for the life of his teacher as well. Here the students were not bereft of the practical knowledge of the domestic affairs because the teachers were themselves settled householders. The student who stayed with his teacher for at least twelve years performing various duties of the preceptor's household got ample scope to develop all sorts of practical knowledge that might be necessary after the completion of the period of discipleship.

(I) THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION WAS CATHOLIC IN OUTLOOK

In the *Chāndogya*¹⁶ we are told that Satyakāma Jābāla went to Hāridrumata Gautama and said, "I have come to the venerable one with a view to spending the period of discipleship". Though the caste system was gradually assuming a definite shape in the society, the teacher did not refuse to accept a pupil of inferior caste in his academy. Satyakāma's caste was not determinable, he being the off-spring of an irregular connection of a maid servant with some unknown person. The teacher being informed of the fact by no other person than Satyakāma himself readily accepted him as disciple. The teacher with his universal outlook and broadbased catholicity charged with refined humanity accepted Satyakāma, the *saumya*, the innocent, noble and simple one, as his disciple.

The *Upaniṣadic* teachers were bold enough to bring about change in the outlook of social ethics, social tradition and

15. Dr. A. S. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, rev. & enl 3rd ed. (Benares: Nanda Kishore & Bros., 1948), p. 32

16. C. U., 4.4.5

norms. It was the simplicity of mind and respect for truth that were considered sufficient qualification for one's admission to the school, and not the degree of so-called social respectability. The birth or caste could not create an obstinate barrier in the pursuit of knowledge of the earnest inquirer. Here we find the picture of a real *guru* who could boldly break the traditional barrier and kindle the spirit of inquiry in the mind of the earnest inquirer ; hence we can correctly infer that the system of education was Catholic in outlook and completely free from all sorts of social prejudices. The *Brāhmanas* also went to the *Kṣatriyas* for instructions. Thus in the *Chāndogya*¹⁷ we find that once five *Brāhmanas* headed by Uddālaka Āruni went to king Aśvapati to have instruction regarding *Vaiśvānara-self* and the latter satisfied them all by explaining the real nature of the self in question. Again in the same *Upaniṣad*¹⁸ we find that king Pravāhana Jaivali instructed two *Brāhmanas* on the real nature of the *Udgītha* (om). In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹⁹ we find Ajātaśatru, the king of Vārāṇasī welcoming Dṛptavālāki Gārgya, the boastful *Brāhmin* with the promise of a thousand cows for a successful discourse on *Brahman*. But Gārgya's theory could not stand the searching criticism of the king. Thereafter Gārgya did not hesitate to fall at the feet of the *Kṣatriya* king and requested him to impart to this sage the supreme knowledge, the real knowledge of *Brahman*. King Janaka²⁰ defeated the *Brāhmana* sages on different occasions during the course of discussion on *Brahman*. It is therefore clear that in the *Upaniṣadic* age even though the caste system was gradually becoming rigid the education was open to all castes and was never the monopoly of the *Brāhmanas* alone.

(II) LIBERAL OUTLOOK OF THE SYSTEM

The system of education was liberal in the true sense of the term. It was not liberal because there was no subject on

17. C U., 5 11-1

18. C. U., 1 8 1

19. B. U., 2 1

20. B U., 4

earth which was not taught in the hermitage schools. It was liberal in the sense that it could infuse the spirit of liberal outlook, in the minds of the students. It aimed at instilling a spirit of humanism in the minds of the pupils and establishing a feeling of universal brotherhood among them. The teacher's intention was not to stuff the brain of the youngsters with masses of information but to awaken their intelligence to kindle a spirit of inquiry and to instill a thirst for knowledge. The student came out the *gurukula* as an earnest inquirer, a real lover of knowledge and a true exponent of the cultural heritage. The teacher gave to the deserving students all his experiences gained in the light of his spiritual researches in his life with the hope that the flame of learning would never be extinguished ; the process of transmission would never stagnate and the advancements of knowledge would never be retarded. The students learnt the noble virtue of self-denial from the teachers who were the embodiment of truth, piety, purity, etc. The teachers did neither display any sign of arrogance or egotism in any sphere of life nor engage themselves in such activities as would go against the social welfare. The students never boasted of their learning.

Humility, truthfulness, obedience and reverence for the elders were the noble traits which characterised the life of students. Their life was guided by the motto '*vidyā dadāti vinayam*' ; the highest result of culture is humility and modesty. The students could never conceive the idea that he had acquired all sorts of knowledge but he was ever eager to learn more and more and to enrich his treasure house of knowledge throughout his life. The students came out of the *gurukula* with largeness of hearts, openness of mind and spiritual outlook and in fact, this is the ideal of a true liberal type of education.

The teachers of the *Upaniṣads*, we have already noticed wanted to create an atmosphere of absolute academic freedom and instilled the same idea in the minds of the community of students. The *Upaniṣadic* teachers were not to be easily led away by superstition and in a number of places they challenged the mystic nature of some deities and advanced cogent reasons to back their arguments instead of dogmatic

assertions. T.

going to a royal sacrifice and ~~the~~ priests there so as to explain the nature of the deities and when they failed to give any answer he himself clarified the issue to them. In the *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* as well, the *Kṣatriya* teachers were imparting spiritual instruction to the *Brāhmaṇa* sages in an atmosphere completely free from such traditional barrier. It was the prerogative of the *Brāhmaṇa* to impart instruction on spiritual matters to all. The changes that we notice is due to the liberal outlook of the system of education. The moral atmosphere of the school, the direct relation of the teacher and the student and the constant supervision of the former went a long way in making the educational system an effective agency in keeping the torch of learning ever burning with undimmed effulgence.

(III) THE SYSTEM CONSIDERS KNOWLEDGE AS A MEANS AND NOT AS AN END

The curricula of the system of education were vast, varied and extensive. It comprised subjects of both sciences and humanities, making it an integrated course. From the dialogue between Nārada and Sanat-Kumāra in the *Chāndogya* we can form some idea about the subjects included in the curricula. This will be discussed in a succeeding chapter in detail.

The sage Nārada had studied all the *Vedas* and other branches of learning but still was not satisfied because he did not realise the *Supreme Reality*. So he approached Sanat-Kumāra to show him the path of real knowledge, the path that leads to self-realisation. Sanat-Kumāra asked Nārada, "let me know first what you have already learnt. What is beyond that I shall teach you."

Thereby Sanat Kumāra, the distinguished teacher wanted Nārada to state clearly all subjects the latter had studied previously. The teacher's intention was to know something about the background of the student so that he might proceed according to the actual requirement of the student. This fact

reveals one of the fundamental principles of education, viz moving from the known to the unknown. From the list of subjects enumerated by Nārada we can infer that the curricula adopted in the school was encyclopaedic in character. It included subjects of both humanities and sciences, sacred and secular learning. This leads us to think that the curriculum was a most comprehensive and integrated one. But the teacher on being told that Nārada had studied all the branches of learning taught in the *gurukula* declared that all his (Nārada's) former knowledge was but a name (*Nāma eva*), i. e. mere words.

From this we can infer that the education received in *gurukula* was not considered to be an end in itself. Education was considered as a life-long process. The *gurukula* put greater emphasis on provoking the curiosity and inquisitiveness of the students. In the twin process of teaching and learning there was a vigorous interplay between the teacher's knowledge and earnest inquiries of the student. The process of education was carried on in a kind of healthy dialogue between the students and the teachers. The teacher could infuse the spirit of an earnest inquiry in the minds of the students which remained ever shining and working and it is for this reason that we find Nārada in spite of his encyclopaedic knowledge seeking another *guru* to solve the problem that pestered his mind. Thus the process of acquiring knowledge went on till the end of one's life. It is also clear from the story of Śvetaketu and Āruṇi in which it is said that he returned home after having completed his studies with the teacher at the *gurukula*, but it was later on that he was taught the supreme truth by his father which Śvetaketu could not acquire in the *gurukula*.

We also realise from the foregoing deliberation that knowledge was not regarded as the end but as the means of attaining the highest wisdom leading to eternal bliss. The *Upaniṣadic* teacher made a distinction between knowledge and wisdom. The teacher of the *Isopaniṣad* had made this point explicitly clear by a beautiful simile; "The real is concealed

under the glamour of knowledge as the real form of the sun is obscured from our view by the dazzling light surrounding that luminary"²².

Further, the teacher in the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*²³ says that the real end of education which is the *Eternal Truth* or *Supreme Bliss* cannot be achieved by mere learning, by reciting the text, or even by listening to those who have gathered experience but by self-introspection, it is a matter which entirely depends upon individual's interiorisation.

The *Upaniṣadic* teacher enjoyed some sort of liberty of thought and action and prepared a fertile ground for the growing generation to derive finer results in the search of truth.

The teacher of the *Īsopaniṣad*²⁴ says, 'those who hold ritualism (*avidyā*) to be their end enter darkness; in deeper darkness are they who hold knowledge (*vidyā*) to be their goal'. The thinking man so acts in the world as to make this body a fit receptacle for immortality and uses his knowledge-attaining immortality. From this fact as well we can imagine that knowledge was not considered as the end of education but as a means of attaining the highest end of human life, the attainment of immortality.

In the *Mundaka*²⁵, the study of the *Vedas* and the *Vedāṅgas* was considered to be an inferior type of knowledge and the higher knowledge is considered to be that of the immortal self. Education aimed at attaining that higher knowledge leading to final emancipation from worldly bondage.

In the *Chāndogya* we find further evidence of this view when we find the father putting the question to his son, "Of what use is your education if you have not learnt why and how men are born and where they go after death".

Sanatkumāra's last instruction is '*bhūmaiva sukham*'. Infinity is bliss; there is no bliss in anything finite, '*nālpe sukhamasti*'.

22. *Iṣa*, 15

23. *Kaṭha*, 1-2-23

24. *Iṣa*, 11

25. *Mundaka*, 1-1-1

Maitreyī in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and Naciketas in the *Kaṣhopaniṣad* have sacrificed wealth and riches for the sake of immortality. The system of education was meant for securing immortal bliss, the final beatitude.

In order to achieve this ideal the *Upaniṣadic* teacher's *gurukula* functioned simultaneously as a cultural centre and a research institution. It was an association of scholars engaged in acquiring, transmitting and advancing knowledge. It was the place where the seers were not satisfied with the truth they perceived but tried to make others realise it. In fact the *gurukula* performed two more functions — the promotion of knowledge and transmission of essential feature of culture which could make the life of the community rich in a spiritual sense.

In the *Upaniṣadic* age this dual function of education was fully recognised, and every student entered the *gurukula* with a vow :

*'anenādhītena ahorātrān.samdadhāmi ṛtam vadiṣyāmi,
satyom vadiṣyāmi tanmānavatu, tadvaktāramavatu avatu mām,
avatu vaktāram.'*

The student promised to his teacher that he will pursue his studies day and night without break, that he will make an endeavour to find the truth and speak it, that he will always try to see spiritual truth and adhere to it.

This promise on the part of the students speaks of the two-fold aspects of the educational system. The students must dedicate themselves to the pursuit of knowledge unceasingly without interruption and they must try to find out the truth, the ethical basis of life and be loyal to it. The *Upaniṣadic* teachers considered the pursuit of knowledge and the adherence to social truth as the essential function of any educational system which can alone sustain the social structure and lead it to the manifold progress of culture and civilization.

THE ACADEMIC MOBILITY

The system encouraged perfect academic mobility. In those days students went far and wide in order to attach

themselves to renowned scholars²⁶. Celebrated teachers also travelled from place to place for academic discussions. There were also teachers to whom students come from all sides 'as waters run downwards, as months go to the year' (T.U.I-4-3). The students usually remain with his teacher till the end of his education, but for specialisation there was no objection to his going to other teachers who were considered to be expert in other branches of learning in which the students wanted to specialise. Thus education became widespread and specialised and as such some specialised schools known as *Śākhā-kula* developed to train up pupils in some one of the offices of the sacrifice.

Advanced students often held mutual discussions in the society and travelled far and wide in the country in search of celebrated teachers. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*²⁷ we are told that Śvetaketu Āruneya, went to Pravāhaṇa Jaivali of Pañcāla. In the *Chāndogya*²⁸ we find Prācīnaśāla Aupamanyava, Satya, yajña Pauluṣi, Indradyumna Bhāllaveya, Jana Śārkarakṣya and Buḍila Āśvatarāśvi headed by Uddālaka Āruṇi went to the *Kṣatriya* king Aśvapati Kaikeya and got their problems solved. Śilaka Śūlāvātya, Caikīrjāna Dālbhya, and Pravāhana Jaivali had some discussion on *Udītha*²⁹.

Such learned debates and discussions between the teacher and the taught, father and the son, husband and wife made the educational system more invigorating and exhilarating for the advancement of learning in the society.

Further, discussions were held in the interval hours of the sacrifices which was open to the public and it served as an agency in the spread of knowledge in the society.

Besides these there were also some national gathering summoned by the kings to which scholars from different parts

26 B U., 3 3 2 : 5 1

27. *Ibid*, 6 2 1

28. C U., 5 11 1

29. *Ibid*.

of the country came held discussions and debates. The national gathering at Janaka's court is a glaring instance in point.³⁰

The educational system was very economic but most effective. There was no or little direct help from the kings but then there was no dearth of scholars and teachers who dedicated their lives for keeping up the light of knowledge ever shining. One of the most essential features of the educational system was that the student, whether studying under his father or his guru, knew full well what he studied and why he studied it. The education was purposeful, optimistic and bliss-giving and the student pursued his studies with a definite motive for a definite ideal.

In order to attain these ideals the *Upanisadic* teacher set forth certain ethical ideals considered to be most useful in practical life. Thus in the *Kāthopaniṣad*³¹ it is said that He who is not free from bad conduct, who is not tranquil, not composed, not of peaceful mind cannot obtain Him by intelligence (alone). Again the same *Upaniṣad*³² declares He who is devoid of reason is unmindful and impure does not reach that goal of final bliss but undergoes transmigration and reincarnation.

The method of teaching was of oral and of explanatory type to suit the condition of the society. The *Taittirīya*³³ mentions the relation of the teacher and the taught, the subject of study and the method of teaching as follows:

'Athādhiṣṭīyam, ācāryaḥ purvarupam antevasyuttarāṇi paṇḍitā samdūḥaḥ pravaçanaṁ sandhānam ityadhiṣṭīyam

Thus in respect of education the teacher is the front part. The pupil is the hind part. Knowledge is the link. Exposition is the connecting force.

30 R U 3 1 1

31 *Kāṭha* 1 2 24

32 *Ib* 1 12 6

33 T U 13 3

The study started with recitation but it was soon followed by explanation and in some cases with some concrete illustrations as well.

Memory and imagination played an important role in the scheme of education. From the beginning to the end subjects were learnt by heart. Instruction started with prayer, worship and recitation of the *Vedic* hymns. The *Upaniṣadic* teachers laid great emphasis not only on memory but on the mental faculty as a whole so as to ensure proficiency in subjects other than those studied under a *guru* in a regular way. The mental power was so much developed that the pupils could acquire proficiency in any branch of learning and apply their knowledge in practical life. The system produced men with trained intelligence and imagination.

This fact is evident from the *Gāyatrī* prayer itself in which the reciter prays for the stimulation of his understanding. In fact education started with the *Gāyatrī* prayer and the *Vedic* seers paid much more attention to the stimulation of the mental acumen. The practice of morning and evening prayers went a long way in building up the right moral conduct and stimulation of understanding.

But the *Upaniṣadic* teachers engaged themselves in deep meditation instead of oral prayer. This happened, it seems, as a natural consequence of their spiritual consciousness. They preached the same principle in different ways and ultimately came to the same conclusion that *Brahman* can be realised through meditation. Education aims at the realisation of that knowledge. A man of meditation so acts in this world as to make his body a fit receptacle to achieve immortality and uses his knowledge to attain life eternal. It is said that the knowledge of the self, of eternal life is not obtained by learning, by the recitation of the *Vedic* texts, or even by listening to the experiences of others, but is entirely a matter of the individual's

self introspection³⁴ which fills the earnest seeker with sweetness and light, with truth knowledge par excellence and bliss profound

Moral and spiritual values in the system

The cultivation of a sense of spiritual values and the adherence to the delegation of duty made the educational system efficient in fulfilling its desired end, namely, the realisation of the self'. The *Upaniṣadic* teachers laid great emphasis on intellect and character of the disciple which should reinforce each other. They considered both these aspects to be equally important in preparing good man and the useful man of the society. The objective of the system was not knowledge of values, but commitment to them, and mention may be made of the following³⁵ which were choosen as guidelines in day to day conduct

- (1) adherence to truthfulness
- (2) dutifulness
- (3) love of scholarship
- (4) service to the teacher
- (5) reverence to mother, father and teacher
- (6) honesty, courtesy, self discipline and self sacrifice

The values of truth and reverence, courtesy and loyalty, discipline and self sacrifice were impressed on the minds of the young disciples and these values were looked upon as the most vital and dynamic instrument for transformation in outlook and behaviour of the student. The student could learn effectively the spiritual values such as a knowledge of 'self', charity kindness towards all power of endurance and humility from the close contact of their teachers. The teachers were also equally able to develop such values in the student by virtue of their close association with them. Thus the system indicates the significance of the imperceptible educational influence which the teacher as living example could exert unwittingly on the minds of the students. The whole objective of the system was.

34 *Aṣṭha* 1 2 23

35 *TU*, 1 1 2

not in amassing facts but in acquiring true wisdom, and not in making a comfortable living but in bringing real happiness in life.

It is high time to lay stress on the need for the moral and spiritual values in our educational system of to-day. The only way to individual welfare, social progress and national prosperity is to revise the spirit of *gurukula* system established by our ancient educators if we desire to make our educational institution the real home of learning where knowledge can be pursued in a spirit of reverence to the teachers to whom we owe our culture. The progress of a nation depends not on its political structure or social pattern but on the character of its people. Our educational system should be vitalized with the revival of the *gurukula* spirit in order to inculcate these moral and spiritual values in students.

The Four Stages of Life

Since the earliest times an attempt has been made by the Hindu thinkers to work out an ideal scheme of the society and an ideal pattern of individual life to reach the ultimate goal. With these ideals in view the Hindu Society was based on *āśramadharma* and it has its utility for a life of peace and happiness in this world and release from the trammels of birth and death hereafter. Some of the *Upanisads* advance sound reasoning as to why it was necessary at all to project these ideals before the society. This in turn forms the back ground of our subject for discussion. Education aims at transmitting habits or knowledge with the intension of helping the individual to rise from the state of ignorance to the level of illumination in all its aspects intellectual moral and spiritual.

The individual souls are labouring under *avidya* (ignorance) and rotating in the wheel of *samsara* owing to the inexorable law of *karma* without rest. So it has become imperative to find out ways and means to the attainment of true wisdom to be released from the ever lasting cycle of birth and rebirth to attain *mokṣa* or perfect bliss. The awakening of exalted wisdom in man is the realisation of the ultimate which amounts to spiritual freedom. By spiritual freedom one can overcome all worldly interests vanity and glamour, and

ultimately attain perfect bliss which is the attribute of *Brahman* and the sumum bonum of life. So says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* ¹ 'ātmā vā are drastavyah, śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyah' verily the Self his to be seen, to be heard about, to be reasoned about, to be pondered on.

The *Upaniṣadic* seers maintain that in order to attain the highest goal of life a well planned scheme is essential which may be worthwhile to the younger generation and useful to the community. As a result the institution of *āśramadharma* or *caturāśrama* evolved in the society. Thus intending the advancement of the people of the community as a whole, the span of life is divided into sub-periods assigning to each period certain obligations for spiritual growth one after another. Here in this scheme, life begins in obedience and ends in freedom. However it is not necessary for our purpose to go into the details of *āśramadharma* purely from sociological stand point ; we shall confine ourselves only to the first two stages of life which have important bearing on the education of the *Vedic* age.

The introduction of four *āśramas* in the society is bound up with the system of education prevailed therein. The word *āśrama* is derived from the root 'śram' which means to exert oneself or to do penance and hence it means a hermitage i.e. a place where austerities are performed and consequently the period of life when such duties are performed. The ultimate end of human life is to attain one goal, viz, the highest spiritual consciousness, and to that end man has to direct his energies proportionately in four different stages and for the accomplishment of the ideal, the three of the four *āśramas* are devoted to the study of that ideal by the members of the society. 'The institution of *āśramas*' observes Bokil 'in individual life and of the castes in the national life made a great advance over the past, so far as organic progress was concerned. The

person had a place in the nation as a whole and was bound to do certain duties for it, but at the same time he was free to work for his own spiritual upliftment² "It is of interest to note" remarks Kabir "that a man was entitled to renounce the world only when he had passed through the three earlier stages. He had to serve as an apprentice in the school of life, discharge his duties to family and society and remain as an elder but detached member of the community before he was free to seek individual salvation"³

In the second chapter of the *Chândogya*⁴ in section twenty three, we have an account of the fourfold division of the *āśrama* in human life. The author of the said *Upaniṣad* puts it under the three moral laws or branches of duty. The householders are advised to give themselves up to sacrifice, study and charity. The recluse to austerity or penance and the student to a life of celibacy and discipline under the intellectual and spiritual tutelage in the house of a preceptor while the last part is life merged in *Brahman*.

From this passage of the *Chândogya* it appears that the order of enumeration of these *āśramas* stands as the *gṛhasthāśrama* or the life of the married householder, the *vānaprasthāśrama* or that of the wondering hermit or forest dweller, the *brahmacaryāśrama* or that of the bachelor students and the last is the *sannyāsāśrama* or the life of renunciation or the ascetic. We may notice here that the order of enumeration as it stands in the *Chândogya* is not the conventional order admitted by all authorities of *Dharmaśāstras*. The correct enumeration of the four orders of human life is met with in certain *Upaniṣads*, *Dharmaśāstras* and *Smṛti* texts. As an

2 V P Bokil, *The History of Education in India*, pt I p 75

3 Harniss Kabir *Ind. as Philosophy of Education* (Bombay Asia Publishing House 1964), p 173

4 CU., *trayo dharma skandhāḥ yajño dhyanam dānam itī prathamastapa eva dīṭhyo brahmacāryacārya kula-vāsi, itītyo tyantam ātmānam ācāryakule vasādayān sarva ete puṇya-lokā bhavanti brahma samstho mṛtatam eti* (2.23.1).

instance in point the *Jābālopaniṣad*⁵ thus enumerates the four stages "on completion of *brahmacarya* or studentship one should become a householder. On termination of the householder's stage one should retire to the forest i.e. enter into the *vānaprastha* stage which again leads to the ultimate or fourth stage called *sannyāsa* or *prabrajā*. Also Kālidāsa the celebrated poet of India while describing the family custom of his favourite dynasty of *Iksvāku* in his *Raghuvamśa*⁶ says that the male scions of the family devoted their boyhood to the study of letters, and the middle part of it to the pursuits of sensuous pleasures. They resorted to the life of an anchorite in their old age and in the final stage they practised *yoga* as a preparation for resigning their material bodies. Here we find a traditional pattern of the individual life as established in the Indian civilization. 'The Hindu system of *āśrama*' observes Radhakrishnan⁷ 'according to which every one of the twice-born towards the close of his life must renounce the world and adopt the homeless life and the ascetic's garb has had great influence on the Indian mind. Though in intention, certain classes were not eligible to become monks, in practice monks were recruited from all castes'.

In the fifth chapter of the *Chāndogya*⁸ in section ten we find that reference has been made to three stages, viz. the *gṛhastha*, the *vānaprastha* and the *sannyāsa*. However, from the concluding passage of the said *Upaniṣad* we are prone to thinking that the order of the householder or *gṛhasthāśrama*⁹ finds much favour with the author of the *Upaniṣad* concerned. It says—

5 *Jābālopaniṣad* 4, 'brahmacaryam samāpya gṛhī bhavet, gṛhī bhūtvā vanī bhavet, vanī bhūtvā pravrajat'

6 *Raghuvamśa* 1-8

7. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads* (London George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1953), p. 673

8 C.U., 5 10-1

9 *Ibid.*, 8 15 1

*ācārya kulād vedamadhītya jaihū-vidhānam, guroḥ karmā-
tīścēnābhīsamāṣṭya kuṣumbhe sthītā sucau deśe svādhyāyamadhi-
jānao dhārmikān vidadhādātmani sarvendriyaṇi sampratiṣṭhāpya
himsan sarvabhutananyatra tirthebhyaḥ'*

The man after having completed his studies at his teacher's house should return to his home and take a wife according to law and settle in the house. Even in this stage the importance of Vedic studies among all other duties of the householder is greatly emphasised. The householder having equipped his sons and pupils with right conduct, and training them up to righteous life should withdraw his sense organs into self and focus his mind on the meditation of the Supreme Spirit, and thus a householder can enter into the region of Brahman after death and never to return again into this world. Thus the order of the householder has been extolled in this Upaniṣad. We should note that this Upaniṣad points to two types of students characterised by later Vedic texts as *naṣṭhika* and *upākurvaṇa*. The *naṣṭhika* students did not return from the preceptor's institution to their paternal homes, they used to stay forever in the preceptor's house and became teachers, perpetuating the *śiṣya vamsa* or line of learning of the preceptor. This type of students has been referred to in the previous passage of the *Chāndogya* 'ātmanam ācārya kule vasūdayan' and the *upākurvaṇa* type of students has been referred to in the passage noted last. The *upākurvaṇa* students used to return to their homes on completion of study and became householders.

In the eleventh section of the first chapter of the *Taittīrīya*¹⁰ we find distinct reference as to the existence of *āśramadharma* especially of *brahmacārya*—the student life and the *gṛhastha*—the life of the householder.

In the *Mundakopaniṣad*¹¹ we find that reference has been

10 T U., 1 11 1 'vedam anūcācāryo nteṽśinamāni śāsti satyam
vada dharmam; cara svādhyāyānmāpramadaḥ ācāryaḥ priyam-
dhanamāhṣṭya prajātantum mā vyavacchetsih

11 M U 1 2 11
tapaśśradhā ye hya pavatant'aranye
śāntā vidvāmsa bhāikācāryaṇi carantah
suryodāreṇa te vīrajāḥ prayānti
yatrānītaḥ sa puruṣo hyavyayātma

made to *grhasthin*, *vānaprasthin* and *sannyāsin*. In the same *Upaniṣad*¹² we are informed that not only the moral qualities of truth and faith but also the physical attributes of celibacy and austerities in addition to living in the forest and begging of alms are applauded and almost prescribed for the final emancipation. The *Upaniṣadic* seers consider education as a life long process and divide the life of the individual into four stages to each of which different duties and obligations are assigned. These four orders are intended for taking man to perfection through successive stages in a progressive manner without ignoring the problem of livelihood and also to awaken the divine within man and finally to attain emancipation, the supreme goal of human life. Thus this *Upaniṣadic* type of education is far cry from the mere brain building type of education of to-day.

1. *Brahmacarvāśram* (or *Student Life* or the *Life of Education*)

The first stage or *āśrama* according to the four orders of life is *brahmacaryāśrama* or the stage of student life. We are particularly interested in this stage which has a direct bearing on education. The very fact that the student life was called *brahmacarya* bespeaks the great ideal of education. An individual enters into the first stage of life on completion of initiation ceremony which is known as *upanayana* (Holy thread ceremony) and which is performed at a certain age which varies according to the three castes from eight to twelve when his intelligence begins to be seriously active. The word *upanayana* means taking near ; or, leading near to the *guru* for instruction, or initiation into the *Vedas*. Young boys are taken near a *guru* for their education. It is regarded as a regular sacred rite to be performed by every householder as preliminary to students' life of their male children. After the investiture with the sacred

12. M U. 2 1-7.

prāṇāpānau vṛthi yavau tapaśca

śraddhā satyaṁ brahmacaryam vidhīśā

thread a boy is committed to the care of his preceptor dwelling in the forest which is reckoned as the seat of learning for instruction in the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*. In the *Satapatha Brahmana* (11.4.2) we find that the gods and the fathers went to *Prajapati* wearing the sacred thread. We are told in the *Kaṣṭhaki* (2.7) that the all conquering *Kaṣṭhaki* adored the rising sun having performed the investiture with the sacred thread (*yajnopavitam*). The boy who is then considered reborn (*dvija*) is required to stay in the spiritual family of his *guru* till the end of his student career. *Upanayana* is considered a second birth and this second birth is from the *gāyatrī* as the mother and preceptor as the father. Education is looked upon as sacred. As the physical development begins in the mother's womb so the spiritual development begins in the teacher's residence and his admission to school life is again considered a religious sacrament. It may be noted that the student had to acquire learning by the most sincere service to his preceptor lasting from twelve to forty eight years according as he aspires to study and master one, two, three or all the four *Vedas*. Thus the students are to serve his teacher for a number of years devotedly with his whole heart in order to come out as a man of learning or as versed in the *Vedas* and in other *Dharmasastras*. While residing at his *guru's* house he must wear proper girdle, offer prayer to the gods, sages and pitṛs (manes), fetch faggot for kindling the holy fire and so on.

The student should have his soul cleaned by the purity of conduct by *Vedic* rites, self-restraint, strict continence and observance of various vows. He should perform the worship of the morning and evening twilight (*sandhyavandanam*) of the sun and should tend the sacred fire.

The person leading the *brahmana arya* mode of life should always observe rigid vows and with his senses under control should pay attention to the instruction imparted by his preceptor. Reflecting upon the *Vedas* and discharging all the duties, he should pass his days dutifully waiting upon and

serving his preceptor, and always paying deep and sincere regards to him. In short he must live a perfectly holy life¹³.

The rules for the *brahmacārin* formulated by Gobhila, Manu and other law makers also show how painstaking was the life of the student in those days—holding aloft the maxim of plain living and high thinking.

It has been noticed that every individual during his student life is required to observe complete celibacy. The *ṛsis* consider the preservation of chastity or absolute continence not only conducive to the pupil's physical but also to his mental and moral well-being.

"*Brahmacarya* is chastity in thought, word, and deed, always and in all conditions" says Swami Vivekananda, "the chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power, without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual teachers of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power"¹⁴. Not only that, the sages of yore were fully conscious that the period of adolescent is a period of stress and storm and hence requires proper discipline to control and regulate youth for the development of a balanced and integrated personality. The central theme of this schooling is to make them realise the place of *artha* and *kāma*, in the scheme of their lives and also to face the problems of life in a way that ultimately tends to reach the supreme goal of life, perfection and God realisation.

In the first section of chapter eight of the *Chāndogya* we are informed that the longing for objects of sense gratification such as woman and the like that has grown through long continued indulgence extending over several births is not easy to overcome all at once. It is, therefore, found necessary to enjoin upon students various detailed injunctions as 'celibacy and the like observances and taboos. That *brahmacarya* in the present context stands for celibacy is clear from

13. *Mān.* 2.182

14. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* I, 8th ed. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1955), pp. 190 & 263

what *Ācārya* Śaṅkara himself says under the fourth section of the eight chapter of the *Chandogya*¹⁵ when the term is explained as *brahmacaryeṇa strī viśaya tṛṣṇā tyāgena* i.e. renunciation of desire for women. Incidentally however, in the *Praśnopanīṣad* we are told that *brahmacarya* is only disunion of male and female at day time *brahmacaryameva tat yad rātrau ratyā samyujyante*, (*Praśna* 1.13) where Śaṅkara comments as *yad rātrau sa yujyante ratyā tītu brahmacarya meva taditi praśastat yad rātrau bharyāgamanam kartavyam iti jayamapi prāsaṅgikī vidhiḥ*

If the male and female unite at night that is indeed *brahmacarya*. It can however be presumed that the word *brahmacarya* has been used here in the sense of self control in sexual indulgence and not complete continence. Of course, this passage of *Chandogya* refers to the order of the householder and not to the order of student life. *Brahmacarya* is traditionally described as abstinence from the following eight types of activities some of which are mental and some physical

*Smaranam kīrtanam kēlī prekṣanam guhyābhasanam
Samkalpodhyavāsayasca kṛiyavivṛttireva ca
Ēatanmāi thūnamastāṅgam pravādanti manīṣū ah
Viparīttam brahmacaryam etadevūstalakṣnam*

'*Brahmacarya* is not observed Radhakrishnan¹⁶ sex destruction. There is no gulf between flesh and spirit but only between the fallen and the transfigured flesh. Ancient Indian thinkers were of the opinion that the seed within man and woman is intended for the purpose of creating a body by which another soul may come into physical embodiment. When this controlled *brahmacarya* helps creative work of every description. When the seed is wasted in sex excesses the body becomes weak and crippled the face lined the eyes dull hearing impaired and

15 CU 8-4.3

16 S. Radhakrishnan *The Principal Upaniṣads* p. 110

the brain inactive. If *brahmacarya* is practised, the physical body remains youthful, and beautiful, the brain keen and alert, the whole physical expression becomes the image and likeness of the Divine "

2. Importance of Brahmacarya

Human life is full of various desires and to satisfy them man spends his energies in diverse ways. Unless these *energies are concentrated in a particular direction methodically* nothing tangible can be achieved in this world. *Brahmacarya* stands as a method of canalizing both the physical and mental energies of man towards the achievement of the highest goal of one's life.

It is only through *brahmacarya* that one can attain the abode of *Brahman*. In other words *brahmacarya* (celibacy) and similar modes of discipline are regarded as the highest means of success for the seeker of *Brahman*¹⁷.

The *brahmacarya* mode of life was so highly applauded that even the lord of gods Indra¹⁸ had to observe it for 101 years before he could attain the knowledge, par excellence of *Brahman* that *Supreme Reality*.

Sages hoary with age like Sukeśā and others who had already devoted their lives to it, had also lived for a year as *brahmacārī* under the tutelage of Pippalāda before receiving *brahma-vidyā*¹⁹. It is stated in the same *Upaniṣad* (1-10) that self-realisation can be achieved only through austerity (*tapas*), celibacy, faith and knowledge.

17. C U. 8 4 3,

tad ya evaitam brahmalokam brahmacaryeṇānuvindanti, teṣāme vaiṣa brahmalokasteṣam sarveṣu lokeṣu kāmācāro bhavati Where Śaṅkara comments as, "teṣāmeva brahmacaryasādhanavātam brahmadāmeṣa brahmalokaḥ, namreṣām strīviśayasamparkaḥ ca tṛṣṇānām brahma-vidyāṁ pītyathah teṣām sarveṣu lokeṣu kāmācāro bhavati yuktārtham tasmāt paramametad sādhanam brahmacaryam brahma-vidyāyabhiprayaḥ

18. C U. 8 2 3

19. M U. 1 1 2

In the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*²⁰ it is clearly stated that it is through correct knowledge and through celibacy one can experience the *Self*. It is further stated in the same *Upaniṣad*²⁰ that not only *tapas* but *brahmacarya* (celibacy) and *Satya* (truth) are considered to be the effective means for the realisation of the *Self*. The highest truth in life can only be obtained by the disciplined life of a student in pursuit of knowledge par excellence.

The fifth section of the eighth chapter of *Chandogya*²¹ advocates the utility of *brahmacarya*. It has been equated with certain sacrifices. It is not only that *brahmacarya* has been extolled as superior to *yajña* (sacrifice), *īṣṭa* (adoration), *satrajanam* (feeding hermit and the poor), *maunam* (observing silence), *anasaḥjanam* (fasting), *araṇyājanam* (going to live in a forest).

Great importance has been attributed to *brahmacarya* to acquire *pranava* which is recognised as a powerful means of spiritual unfoldment²². It is only through *brahmacarya* that the latent qualities of body, mind and spirit can be drawn out, sustained and developed which ultimately lead to the realisation of the *Supreme Spirit*.

While commenting on the second section of chapter fourth of the *Chandogya*²³ Samkara quoted the view that the (Goddess of) learning declares that a student observing *brahmacarya* i.e. a *brahmacarin* as one of her six channels through which knowledge be transmitted.

20 MU 3 1 5

*satyena labhyaḥ astapasā hyeṣa ātmā
sam ag jñānena brahmacaryena nityam*

Ibid 1 2 11

*tapasā brahmacaryā ye tyupavasantyaranye
śāntā vidvanto bhikṣacaryā carantā*

Ibid 2 1 7

*prāṇāpānau vṛthāvau tapaśca
brahmā śatya brahm acaryam vidhiśca*

21 C.U. 8 5 1 2 3

22 Aṭha 1 2 15

23 C.U. 4 2 5

*brahmacārī dhanadūyī medhāvī śrotriyaḥ priyaḥ
vidyayā vā vidyāni prāhatāni tīrthāni śanmama.*

Manu²⁴ also expresses the view that knowledge should be imparted only to those who have subdued all his senses, i.e. to *brahmacārins*. Śruti also maintains the same view that *brahmacarya* is essential for receiving knowledge :

*Yameva vidyā śucimapramattaṁ medhāvināṁ brahmacaryo'
papaṇnam yaste na duhyet katamañcana ha tasmai mām
vrūyah nidhīpāya brahman*

It is, therefore, clear that knowledge should be imparted to those who observe the vow of *brahmacarya*. It can reasonably be assumed that some of the moral attributes are looked upon as pre-requisites of the instruction and preparatory means of attaining the highest end of human life, the attainment of the knowledge of the *Supreme Reality*.

3. Two types of *Brahmacārins*

The *Jābāla Upaniṣad* declares that one may renounce this world whenever he can cut off the attachment to this world. Adverting to the need to go successively through the first three *āśramas* to the final one of *sannyāsa* and also in continuation of the text *brahmacaryaṁ paṛisamāpya gṛhī bhavet* etc., the *Jābāla-Upaniṣad* says, 'yadi vetarathā brahmacarya-ādeva pravrajat. gṛhāḍvā varāḍvā yad ahareva virajet tadahareva pravrajat. Otherwise, one may become *sannyāsīn* from *brahmacarya* or *gṛhasthya* or *vānaprastha*, one should renounce the very day one attains detachment towards the world. A man during his student life (*brahmacarya*) can even renounce this world if he feels like doing so. The man who takes recourse to renunciation right from the life of studenthood called *naiṣṭhika brahmacārīn* (life long celibacy).

Yājñavalkya the greatest of the *brahmanvādins* of the *Upaniṣadic* age towards the end of his discourse with Janaka, king of Videha who approached him as a student desiring to

be instructed declares: The seekers of *Brahman* wish to realise it through sacrifice gift and austerity of fasting. One who knows *Him* thus becomes a *muni* or a wise man. Desiring the same end mendicants give up their homes. For that very purpose the ancient knowers (of *Supreme Reality*) used not to desire progeny. For they mused thus: What shall we do with progeny if we do not realise the *Self* with this thought they used to take the life of mendicancy leaving behind the desire for progeny, the desire for wealth, the desire for the things of the world since that which is the desire for sons is the desire for wealth and that which is the desire for wealth is the desire for the worlds.

On another occasion Yajñavalkya while answering the question of Āhola Kauṣītakeya reiterates the same view. Similarly some other references of *naiṣṭhika brahmacarin* are met with in other Upaniṣads as well viz., C U 2.23.1, Kaṭha 1.2.15, Praśna 1.9 and M U 3.1.5 where *naiṣṭhika* variety of *brahmacarya* has been recognised as the proper course of spiritual endeavour. The *naiṣṭhika brahmacarins* are known as *samnyasins* who contemplated on the mysteries of life and move far and wide as the spiritual sentinels of the race and the torch bearer of supersensuous knowledge breaking the boundaries of clan and country.

The other type of *brahmacarin* who has a mind to enter into the stages of *gṛhastha* after the prescribed period of *brahmacarya* is known as *upakurvana brahmacarin*. He is so called because he helps (*upakaroti*) the preceptor with some thing in the shape of *dakṣiṇā* ²⁵ on the day of the student's leaving the school. It is said that

*Yo dh tya vidhivad veda i gṛhastha namavrajat
Upakurvanako j eyah i naiṣṭhiko naranantakali*

He who having studied the *Vedas* in prescribed manner enters into the stage of householder is known as an *upakurvana*

25 B U 4.4.22, 3.5.1

23 V de Manu 2.245

brahmacārīn but a *naiṣṭhika* one stays with the preceptor till death. Baudhāyana says, '*brahmacārī guruśuśrūṣi āmarṇāt*' i.e. a *brahmacārīn* is one who serves his preceptor throughout his life, here Baudhāyana refers to the *naiṣṭhika* type of students. According to *Vyāsa saṃhitā*²⁷ a twice-born who practises the vow of of *Vedic* study for 36 years is an *upakurvāṇa*. Mention has been made of *upakurvāṇa* in Manu (2-243 & 244). Yājñavalkya (1-49), *Vaśiṣṭha* (chapter 7) and *Viṣṇu saṃhitā* (28-43) as well.

The *Chāndogya* (2-23-1) clearly refers to the *naiṣṭhika* type of students observing life-long celibacy and staying permanently in the preceptor's residential institution by the words *ṛtīyo* *tyantamātmānam ācāryakule avasādayan*, i.e. 'The third staying permanently in the house of the *ācārya* till demise. The same passage of the *Chāndogya* refers to the *upakurvāṇa* variety of students by the words *dvitīyo brahmacāryācāryakulavāsī*, the second staying in the preceptor's institution for prescribed period till completion of schooling.

4. *Gṛahsthāśrama*

The second stage is that of the *gṛahstha* (householder). Normally on completion of the first stage of life or the period of studentship one returns to one's paternal home and gets married. As per arrangement of his parent he is to marry a woman of the same caste and shoulder the responsibilities of life and society. Marriage is to be regarded as a sacrament and the wife as a helpmate in leading a religious life. The wife is not a means for sensual gratification alone but as a means of self-restraint leading to self-purification.

The purpose of the *gṛahsthāśrama* or of a married life is to appease the gods, the *pitṛs* and to perpetuate the line by procreation corroborating to the ancient saying that a man is said to be born with three debts, that is, a debt to the *Rsis* (sages), a debt to the *pitṛs* (ancestors) and a debt to the *devas* (gods). The debt to the *pitṛs* is paid off by the procreation of

progeny.²⁸ One should discharge the first obligation by studying the *Vedas*, the second by performing sacrifice and the third by begetting children. After having discharged the first by living as a student in the house of the proceptor, he should enter into the family life in order to pay off the other two debts. The order of householder is the excellent of all the stages of life, because the householder gets the opportunity to serve for the existence of the followers of other three stages of life. They (householders) welcome them all with sweet words and give them food with love and respect. Thus the life of the householder is characterised by the special virtues of hospitality, honesty, devotion to religion and social service. According to Manu, just as air is essential to the life of all creatures, so is the householder necessary for the support of those who belong to other three orders. The householder's life is extolled as the most useful stage of life, because the householder who is true to his duty, who is pure and unattached, who earns his livelihood in just and honourable manner and performs the rites and ceremonies as laid down in the *Vedas* can attain salvation. The householder is required to perpetuate and worship the sacred fires²⁹ and also to perform the *agnihotra*³⁰ and other sacrifices.

28 *Śa Brā* 1 7 2 1 and *Taittiriya Samhitā* 6 3 10 5

29 The sacred fires are three namely, *gārhapatya*, *dhavaniya* and *dakṣiṇa*. *Gārhapatya* fire is that which the head of the family receives from his father and transmits to his son in his turn and from which fire for sacrificial purposes is lighted and where the daily *agnihotras* are performed (II) *dhavaniya* is that which is lighted from the perpetual fire and into which all the offerings are made (III) *dakṣiṇa* is that which is placed in the south west of the sacrificial altar and which is employed in cooking the rice for *dakṣiṇa* (of *Istis*) '*gārhapatyāddhavanīyam jvalantam uddharet Pitā vā ego agnindm yad dakṣiṇaḥ putro gārhapatyaḥ putra dhavanīyah—Atiśāyana—Grhyasūtra of Manu* (2 231) also *kulluka under Manu* (2 143). These three fires are collectively called *Treṣṭhni*. According to some authorities the three fires refer to the three as stated here. Some authorities mention *Mārjāliya agni* instead of *dakṣiṇa* whereas the other two viz. *gārhapatya* and *dhavaniya* remain common. In *Manu* 3 105 and 185 five holy fires are mentioned, two more *Sabhya* and *avasahya* being added to the list, by the first no ostensible purpose is served whereas by the later sacraments are performed.

30 *Manu* 6 25

Amongst which the five great sacrifices known as *pañcamahā-yajña* are noteworthy. These five sacrifices consist of acts of piety, namely *deva-yajña* or sacrifice to the departed ancestors by offering oblation to them, *ṛṣi-yajña* or the sacrifice to the sages which consists in the study of the *vedas* daily, *ṇṣ-yajña* or sacrifice to men, which consists in serving his fellow-brothers, in feeding the guest, the poor and the destitute and lastly, the *bhūta-yajña* or the sacrifice to the domestic animals by carefully looking after them.

5. The next stage is that of *vānaprastha*. After the age of fifty a householder is to retire to the forest with his wife relinquishing hearth and home and pass all day in meditating on God. After completing the period of house-holder life, a person is expected to enter into this third stage of life. He is to lead a life of non-attachment and self control. He is not to hoard anything. In the forest he should subsist on wild fruits and roots and should not go-a-begging. He should practise hard austerities and should devote all his time to spiritual pursuit which prepares him for the final stage of his life, namely *sannyāsa*, the fourth and last order of life.

Having attained the fourth stage of life he should renounce all worldly attachment, cares and ties and maintain a spirit of complete indifference. In this stage he should shun the company of his wife also. In the *vānaprastha* stage one is allowed to keep the company of his wife alone but in the last stage *sannyāsa* one should shun the company of his wife also. This injunction is so imperative that sage Yājñavalkya who has realised the *Supreme Spirit*, who figures as the greatest enlightened seer and teacher in the whole range of *Upanisadic* lore, who infuses spiritualism in his wife Maitreyī, sage king, Janaka, etc., also shuns his wives Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī when he adopts the monastic order. This fact is clearly established in the fifth and sixth sections of chapter four of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Sannyāsin* should acquire the supreme knowledge so essential for an ascetic so that he may attain supreme bliss or *mokṣa*. Observes Swami Nikhilananda, "The Indo-Aryan seers arranged the *Vedas* to conform to the four stages

of life. The *brahmachārī* studied the *Saṃhitā*, the householder followed the injunctions of the *Brāhmaṇa*, the forest-dweller practised contemplation according to the *Āraṇyaka*, and the *sannyāsī* was guided by the wisdom of the *Upaniṣads*. According to the Hindu view, all four portions of the four *Vedas* were revealed simultaneously and have existed from the beginning of the cycle. They are not to be regarded as exhibiting a philosophical development or evolution in the process of thoughts³¹.

From the foregoing discussion it may safely be concluded that the institution of the four stages of human life or *āśramas* is firmly established in the *Upaniṣadic* age for the attainment of the knowledge of *Brahman* which comes at the last stage as a fruit of long struggle of a disciplined life through its successive stages. And the view held by scholars like Deussen, Rhy Davids and Keays who deny the existence of the four stages of human life in the *Upaniṣadic* age is untenable. The evidences drawn earlier from the two oldest *Upaniṣads*, the *Chāndogya* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, go to prove the existence of four *āśramas* in the *Upaniṣadic* age as an institution for education of the people for life beyond.

It is of course true that the acquisition of knowledge of par excellence is not always confined to the first stage of life, for it is evident from the story of Śvetaketu in the *Chāndogya* who stays with his preceptor for twelve years but his knowledge is proved to be imperfect at the court of the king Pravāhaṇa Jaivali. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Yājñavalkya imparts instruction to Janaka, Ārtaabhāga, Maitreyi and Gārgī at a later stage of their lives. In the *Chāndogya* we also find that five great householders and theologians along with Uddālaka Āruṇi approach Aśvapati Kaikeya quite late in their lives for instruction. The *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* records

31. Swami Nikhilananda, *The Upaniṣads*, abridgeded. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963) p. 16

that Śaunaka a great householder approaches sage Aṅgiras for instruction. For there in the *Chāndogya* we find Nārada approaching Sanatkumāra after the completion of his study in the first stage of his life.

It is, however, evident that the *Upanisadic* seers consciously put great emphasis on the first stage, i.e. the stage of *brahmacarya* the significance of which embraces the entire stage of human life. They look upon the whole of life as an education received through disciplines of the successive stages of the four *āśramas* for the ultimate realisation of the *Supreme Reality*.

The Teachers

In ancient days there was no established or organised educational institution run by Government or built by collective endeavour in India as it exists today. The residence of the preceptor was the institution where the students after their *upanayana* or initiation ceremony gathered together from different parts of the land to receive their education. The importance which is attached to the institution or the Alma Mater today was attached to the teachers themselves in those days. The teacher took charge of the young students and the responsibility of making them useful members of the society devolved on them. The teacher was called *guru* because he performed the *upanayana* or the initiatory ceremonies and taught the *Vedas*. 'Sa gurur ya kriyāṁ kṛtvā vedamaśmai prayacchati'. The teacher is called *guru*. *guru* means 'heavy' or 'great' and teacher is to be great and his responsibility is to be heavy. 'Gu' means darkness and 'ru' means stopping of darkness. The teacher's duty was to lead the student from darkness to light.

The etymological derivation of the word *guru* is given in the *Gurugītā* as

*guṣabdasṭvāṇḍhīkārasyāt, ruṣabdasamīroddhālah
arḍhīkāraviroddhītvāt gururītyabhidhīyate.*

The root 'gu' stands for darkness, 'ru' for its removal. The removal of the darkness of *ajñāna* in the heart is indicated by the word *guru*".

The teacher is also known as *śrotriya* who has subdued the baser passions by the study of the *Vedas* and contemplation.

He is also called *ācārya* because he shows them the right path to follow, the moral virtues to be cultivated, and the social obligations to be performed in future. The word *ācārya* comes from the root *car* (to behave) and means one who trains others to behave well (*Ācāraṁ grāhaṇīti ācāryah*). It was therefore held that as the world of living being is entirely indebted to the sun for its very life and existence, for all its activity, so the disciple is fully indebted to his preceptor for the entire store-house of his knowledge — the knowledge on which his future life solely depends.

(1) *The importance of teachers*

The teachers who were highly cultured and competent, who had no aspiration for any personal name or fame, not only imparted instruction to their earnest students but also inspired them to search for truth and higher knowledge in life and thus the teacher exercised profound influence on students in inculcating good morals and disciplines, in the formation of their character, and development of their personality, etc., that is the essential traits that go to the making of a useful and worthy citizen of the society.

Since the earliest times education was handed down by oral transmission from generation to generation and consequently no education was possible without the help and guidance of the teacher and it is perhaps due to this reason that the teachers occupied an exalted position and were held in high reverence in the society.

In the absence of any recorded medium of communication the students had to depend entirely upon their teachers. Moreover in the ancient system of education great emphasis

was laid on the correct pronunciation and proper accent in the recitation of the *Vedic* texts which were practically impossible without the help of a properly qualified and competent teacher. Correct pronunciation and proper accentuation which were considered to be sign of high level culture could not be acquired without the help of a teacher who was fully equipped with the science of phonetics and consequently, his importance could not be overrated. Thus the students had no other alternative than to depend upon the voice of their teacher if they wished to pronounce the *Vedic* texts in their correct order with proper accent.

The second *Anuśāka* of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* deals with *śikṣā* or the science of phonetics, failure to observe the principle of phonetics renders pronunciation defective and the defective pronunciation makes the perusal of the text ineffective. It is held that the relation between word and sense is eternal. The story of *Tvaṣṭi* occurring in the *Taittirīya saṁhita*, (II 4 12) is often cited as an example to illustrate how the utterance of the word *Indraśatru* with the *Udatta* accent on the first member of the compound instead of on the last produced fatal result quite against *Tvaṣṭi*'s wish.

All the *Upaniṣadic* teachers were themselves philosophers to a degree and they held certain philosophical ideas which are universally valid. They attempted to solve the most inscrutable problems of life by answers which are largely symbolic and metaphorical. They maintained that certain truths have been disclosed by God through revelation¹ and that His grace is essential for achieving the highest object in life. God reveals His full nature to whomsoever He accepts and

1 *Laṣṭha* 1 2 23 and 1 2 9

*nāṁ amātmā pra acanena labhyo
na medī ayā na balī nā śrutena
yamevaiṣa iṣṭute tena labhya
stasya ca dātā vi ṣṭe tanum svām
naiṣā tarkena matirūpaneḥ
prokṛtīnānā s 1 1 nāṁ a preṣṭa
yām tvam īpaḥ satyadhṛtīrhatī
iṣṭrī no bhūḥ annaciketaḥ praṣṭa*

believed that without His grace, learning becomes futile and *Upaniṣads* contain the more important of these truth. Spiritual truth and conception can neither be well expressed by current vocabulary nor be proved by laboratory demonstration of facts. So the teachers uttered some syllable or letter of the alphabet or some sign whenever a spiritual conception is required to be explained. The meaning of the symbol or sign of the mystical meaning of the combination of letter is handed down from generation to generation through successive *gurus* and hence the reverence for and importance of the philosopher *guru* becomes still more intensified. Without a *guru* to explain and utilize the symbol or the sign the spiritual fact or conception is lost to the world for all practical purposes.

The spiritual salvation, it is generally held, is not possible without the proper guidance of a philosopher *guru*.²

In other words it can be said that true knowledge can be revealed by a true teacher and not by argumentative reasoning. No amount of individual thinking will supply the place of a good teacher. It is said in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* that for the sake of this knowledge let him go, fuel in hand, to a spiritual teacher (*guru*) who is learned in the scriptures and who has realised *Brahman*.³ Both the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* and the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* hold the same view.

"Not by self-study is the *Ātman* realised, not by mental power, not by ammassing much information"⁴.

2. *Kaṭha*,

*na iṣṭā tarkena matirāpaneṣā
proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭhā. (1-2-9)*

3. *M.U.*,

*tad vijñānārtham sa gurumevābhigacchet
samit-pānibh śrotṛiyam brahmanīṣṭham (1 2 12)*

While commenting on this Śaṅkara puts emphasis on the need of a teacher even for those who are versed in the sastras—"Śāstra-jñopī svātantryeṇa brahmanjñānānveṣāṇam na kuryāt."

4. *Kaṭha*, 1-2 23 & *M.U.*, 3-2 3

*nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhajā na bahunā śrutena*

Further, it is said in the *Kaṣhopeniṣad* that the *Ultimate Reality* cannot be realised even by constant meditation, if taught by an ordinary person. No body can realise the truth unless taught by a good preceptor. The *Ultimate Reality* is infinitely subtle and not to be known by argument.

*'ananyaprekṣte gaciratra nastyanijñān hyatarkyamānu
pramānāt'* *Kaṣha*, (1-2 8)

The significant role played by the teacher in making the student capable of crossing the sea of ignorance and to see the light of wisdom is picturesquely described in the *Chāndogya*. "Just as, my dear, some one, having brought a man from the *Gandhāra* region with his eyes bound up and then might leave him in a desolate place, and that man would shout towards the East, or towards the North, or towards the South, or towards the West" - "I have been brought here with my eyes bound up and deserted with my eyes bound up"⁵.

And as some one might release his bandage and tell him, the *Gandhara* regions lie towards this direction, go in this direction, where upon, asking his way from village to village, and becoming informed and capable of judging by himself, he would reach the *Gandhāra* region, in the same manner, in this world, that person knows who has a teacher and for him, the delay is only so long as he is not liberated and becomes merged (in *Brahman*)⁶.

From this it can be well imagined that the knowledge of the path to eternal bliss can be obtained from the preceptor who himself has visualised it as the road to a place has to be learnt from one who knows it. Even if one tries to discover it oneself without any guide, doubt about it has to be dispelled only by reference to another who has the prior knowledge of it. It can be gathered from the dialogue between Śuka and Janaka in the *Yoga vāsiṣṭha* that even though Śuka had acquired all the essential knowledge and though he was properly taught by

5 C.U., 6 14 1

6 *Ibid*, 6 14 2

his own father, Vyāsa, his mind got firmly absorbed in *Brahman* only after he listened to the words of the king Janaka who was a truly realised soul. 'When all is said', observes Śrī Kapilī Sastri, "the fact remains that definite entry into the *Sādhanā*, the awakening into the Spirit within, the actual building of the inner life, usually begins only when one has a Satyakāma, the teacher, to transmit the tangible secret and light the life within the seeker or one happens to be a Satyakāma, the disciple, whom the Gods looked upon with the favour opening his eye of vision to the supreme Truth"⁷.

Again in the *Upaniṣads* we find some instances which clearly show the futility of mere self-study without guide and the ultimate necessity of a teacher who can only quench the thirst of the aspirant for true knowledge. No one can get the inner significance of the hidden treasure without proper guide. Besides one may acquire knowledge by self-study but it requires the touch of a live wire to transform it into wisdom.

In the seventh chapter of the *Chāndogya*⁸ we are told that Nārada though possessed of an extensive knowledge of all the branches of knowledge, still feels that his knowledge falls lamentably short and approaches the teacher Sanatkumāra to instruct him so that he can cross the ocean of ignorance, whatever he has learnt so far is mere name (and not the Thing in itself). To Nārada, whose impurities have been destroyed, the blessed Sanatkumāra shows the other shore of the ocean of darkness :

"*Tasmai mṛditaśūyāya tamasah pāram darśayati bhogavān Sanatkumārah*". (7-16-2)

The real task of a teacher lies in resolving the doubts and in evolving in the opening mind the true significance of the things that are imperfectly known.

He is a teacher who himself has realised the ideal and the truth for which the earnest seekers approach him and who

7. Kapilī Sastri, *Light on the Upaniṣads*, p 39

8. C U., 7-16-2

has the power to communicate the fruit of his realisation to those who come to him for it. We may refer to the declaration made by Asvapati the great teacher to his disciples Āruṇi and others in the *Chandogya*

pratarāḥ pratīvaktasmi itī (5 11 7)

The *Upanisads* have repeatedly told that without teacher there can be no spiritual attainment. He is indeed the father who gives the inner life (*Praśna* 6 8 *tvam hi nah pita*)

Further, the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* records that the teacher is not the shower of the path but the embodiment of the path. For those who take refuge in him are lifted up from the ocean of darkness and ignorance and led to immortality. Thus the aspirant prays to the preceptor

uddhartum arhasi andhodapanastho bheka ivaham asmin sansare bhagavan tvam no gatis tām no gatiḥ (1 4)
 "Be pleased to deliver me. In this cycle of existence I am like a frog in a waterless well. Revered Sir, you are our way of deliverance, you are our way."

The importance of the teacher can be inferred again while in the fourteenth section of chapter four of the *Chandogya*⁹ we are told that Satyakama the preceptor was confident that his disciple Upakosala who stayed with him for twelve years and who was devoted to fires will be directly instructed by the sacred fire which was pleased with his service and virtues. So Satyakama left home without instructing Upakosala. Indeed the fires said O *Upakosala* dear you have this knowledge of ourselves and the knowledge of the *Ātman*. But the teacher will tell you the way i.e. will instruct you regarding the proper means of realising the *Supreme Spirit*.

Here we see how Upakosala tended the fires for twelve years and was blessed by them with the superior knowledge

9 C U 4 14 1 *Te loc rupakosala śi va may te asn ad śi ś a*
t a ś i ś c l e r a t te gat i vakteti whereupon Śan kara says
i d) āphala prāptaye

but still they advised him that for the path he must go to a teacher. It is said in the *Rg-veda*

*akṣetravit kṣetravidāṁ hyaprāt
sa pratī kṣetravidānuśīṣah
etadvā bhadramanuśāsanasyota
srutīm. ldatyañjasinām* (10-32-7)

The stranger asks the path who knows it, taught by him who knows he marches forward. This is, in truth, the blessings of instruction, he finds the path leads directly forward

We are further informed that satyakāma himself respectfully expressed in the same *Upaniṣad*¹⁰ before his preceptor Gautama that "the knowledge which has been learned from a teacher has the greatest efficiency i.e. to say, best helps one to attain his end". The teacher implants the seed of realisation in the mind of the disciple and tends its growth in him by his constant guidance, influence and insight. The spark of truth lying in the disciple is kindled by the inspired instruction of the teacher.

The *Kaṣṭha* *hōṇanīṣad* lays great emphasis on the need of and importance of a *guru* or spiritual teacher to realise the truth which is beyond argumentative reasoning or demonstrable facts. The *Śruti* says, '*ācāryavān puruṣo veda*'. One obtains knowledge by instruction by a preceptor or *guru*. He who has a teacher really knows. The knowledge of the truth is beyond the reach of the human intelligence and is extremely difficult to acquire without the guidance of a competent guide.

The truth is not easily conceivable even after frequent meditation, if taught by an inferior person. No body can realise the truth unless taught by a competent preceptor. Truth is subtler than the subtle, not easily comprehensible by common senses¹¹.

10. C U, 4 9 3

ācāryadṛṣṭvā vidyā viditā sādhiṣṭham prāpayati

11. *Kaṣṭha*, 1 2 8

Man is imperfect, perfection is his goal. He may gather immense knowledge but he can never overcome the limitations of his intellect and sense organs. His egoism and imperfection cloud his vision and incapacitate him to realise the *Supreme Reality*. If he resorts to a teacher who is not a realised soul he will fail in his mission of attaining liberation through knowledge par excellence and that will amount to a blind leading another blind. Hence is the urgent necessity of having a *Brahmajña* preceptor, a realised soul as a guide to take him across the troubled waters to the shore of eternal peace and perennial bliss. Lord Śaṅkarācārya has time and again stressed the necessity of such an *acarya* for the disciples attaining the supreme goal of human life. In his commentaries on the *Upaniṣads* and in the eulogies composed by him Śaṅkara rings out the warning frequently that man however learned he may be should never attempt to realise *Brahman* without the able guidance of a realised soul (vide Śaṅkara on *Mundak* 1 2 12, 'śāstrajñō pi śatantryeṇa brahmajñānanivesanam rakuryāt').

Hence the need and importance of a competent teacher who himself has realised the highest truth can never be overestimated. Regarding the importance of teachers we are told in the *Chândogya* that the sages were keen to learn spiritual wisdom from their teachers, for fear that in the absence of these teachers there would be none left who would convey the highest wisdom and truth profound. 'What could not be otherwise heard what could not be otherwise thought what could not be otherwise known' ¹²

(II) The qualification of a teacher

It goes without saying that the teachers who enjoy so exalted a position in the society must have had certain essential qualities which distinguish them from others. The teacher should possess certain basic qualities which may characterise

12 C U 6 4 5 Etadāśaśa vai tad jñāna sa āhī purve malā śālā mal āśrotṛjñāna no dya kaścanāśrutan an atamast jñatam da hariṣyatitī hyebhaya v duṣakruḥ

him to be a man of integrated personality. In the *Muṇḍaka*¹³ it is said that a teacher should be *śrotriya* i.e. one who is well versed in scriptures as Śaṅkara says

*Śrotriyaṃ adhyāyanaśrutārthasaṃpannam*¹⁴

It is only he who has inquired into *Brahman* after the study of the scriptures that can qualify for realisation of *Brahman*.

Secondly a teacher should be *Brahmaṇiṣṭha* (*brahmaṇi ṇiṣṭhā jasya*) i.e. one who dwells in *Brahman* or one who has realised the *Supreme Reality*. While commenting on tranquillity of mind and control of senses he remarks

'gururmevācāryaṃ samadamada yūdi saṃpannam

In other words it may be said that a teacher should be a vastly learned man who has attained the self realisation, and who possesses tranquillity of mind and has his senses under control. One of the most essential characteristic of a teacher is that he should be *kriyāṇ* (performing works) as it is said in the same *Upaniṣad*¹⁵. A teacher is not merely judged by his precept but by the example he sets which can only exercise a remarkable influence on the life and outlook of the students. The teacher was judged not merely by what he taught, but by what he was, "As one acts, he becomes—good by good deeds, bad by evil; what action he performs, into that does he become changed"¹⁵.

The *Taittirīya* mentions "*śrotriyaṣya cākāmahataṣya*" one who has studied the *Upaniṣads* and who is not subjected to the promptings of desire for external objects. Śrī Śaṅkara in his *Vivekaśūdhī* mentions the characteristics of such a *guru*

13. M. U., 1 2 12

14. M. U., 1 2 12

15. B. U., 4-4 5 "Yathakāri yathācārī tathā bhavati, Sādhu-kārī Sādhu-bhavati pāpakārī pāpa bhavati, puṇyah puṇyena karma-ā bhavati, pāpah pāpena, atho khalvāhuḥ kāmamaya evāyaṃ puruṣa iti, sa yathākāraṃ bhavati tatkraturbhavati, yatkrateur-bha vati, tat karma kurute, yat karma kurute, tadabhisampadyate".

35—

*‘Śrotriyor jino kāmahato yo brahma viduttamah
brahmany uparataśśānto nirindhana vānalah*

The guru is well versed in scriptures he is sinless he is not subjected to desire he is a knower of *Brahman* he is the eminent knower of *Brahman* withdrawing himself into *Brahman* he is ever at peace he is like a fire without fuel

The teacher should be sinless He should be free from all blemishes He who has no idea of bliss of self realisation is naturally drawn to external object of pleasures and consequently may have to commit sin in the process of attaining them The *Kaṭho Upaniṣad*¹⁶ says that the virtuous conduct, peaceful and concentrated mind are the means of attaining knowledge par excellence and not merely by *prajñā* alone

Regarding the ideal teacher Prof Venkateswara observes that the teacher was to be a very store-house of knowledge full of sympathy and charity cheerful and lively and of engaging manners leading a pure and blameless life orderly in habits and regular in routine gifted with a sense of proportion and having the courage of conviction with a majestic personality capable of enforcing discipline with an optimistic outlook on life and in intent on social service¹⁷

A teacher is not regarded merely as a store-house of information collected but as an instrument of social service and social change and therefore he is expected to mould his life as a social servant It is said *Yah kriyān sa vidā* He is a learned man whose life is devoted to socially useful activity and he is regarded as the best of all teachers (*Brahma id brahmanāda varīṣṭhaḥ*)

Further a teacher says the same *Upaniṣad* should be *udhasattvaḥ*¹⁸ i.e. a man of purified nature A teacher whose heart

16 *Kaṭha* 1 2 24

*dvirato Idar tannāsānto nāsamāh tal
nāsāntamānaso vāpi prajñānena namāpnuyāt*

17 S V Venkateswara *Indian Culture Through the Ages* Vol I
(London New York Longman Green & Co 1928) p 78

18 M U 3 1 10

is pure and free from malice, and hatred can attract people and can engage himself for the welfare of the society.

It is declared in the *kāṣhopeniṣad*¹⁹ that "truth cannot be realised when taught by a inferior man." Regarding the intellectual qualification required of a teacher the *Prātisākhya*²⁰ of the *Rg-veda* says, "he must himself have passed through the recognised curriculum and have fulfilled all the duties of the *brahm-acārin*, before he is allowed to become a teacher". The essential qualification of a teacher is that he must take education as a lifelong process (*jāvajñāmadhite viprah*) The *kāṣhopeniṣad*²¹ has emphasised the need of a qualified and competent teacher

"uttisṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata"

Arise, awake and acquire true knowledge by approaching the best teacher

The Teacher was Held in High Veneration

Since the *Vedic* times the teacher was regarded as the spiritual and intellectual father of the student. As a matter of fact the students showed to their teachers the highest reverence for their intellectual regeneration. In the *Praśnopaniṣad* we are told when the sage Pippalāda dismissed his pupils, they honoured him with the farewell address .

"Thou art our father, who carries us over the infinite ocean of our ignorance Salutation to the supreme *Rṣi*, salutation to the supreme *Rṣi*"²²

The student paid such a homage to their *gurus*. This shows the modesty and humility on the part of the student and the

19 *Kaṭha*, 1 2 8

20 *Prātisākhya*

Pārāyanam varttayad brahmachāri guruḥ śiṣyebhyastadanubratibhyah adhyāśino dīśamekam prasartam prācīmudicimā-
parajitam vā.
(Chapter, 15 1)

21 *Kaṭha*, 1 3-14.

22. *Praśna*, 6-8.

te tam arcayāntah, tvam hi nah pitā yu'smākam avidyāḥ param pāram tārayasi, iti, namaḥ paramaṣṭibhyo namaḥ parama ṣṭibhyah
Where upon samkara says, "kimācurityāhātvaṁ hi no' smākam pitā-

high regard they paid to their revered *gurus* and this is what education stands for '*vidyā dadāti vinayam*', learning begets modesty. The teacher is to be revered more than parents because the parents are merely the sources of our gross physical birth while the preceptor is the source of illumination of our mind leading to reach the ultimate goal of life. The preceptor gives the pupils spiritual birth whereas the worldly father is the progenitor of biological birth.

The teacher is to be revered because a student can know or ascertain the nature of the knowledge only through the exposition of the great teachers who are realised souls i.e. who have attained God realisation. No student can have access to any area of knowledge without implicit reverence for the teacher. In fact in the student reverence and faith are required for obtaining true knowledge and nobody can afford to ignore it. At the end of the *Śvetāsvatara*²³ we are informed that the truth is manifested in the heart of those who have the highest devotion for God and an equal degree of devotion for his spiritual teacher (*guru*). In the *Chandogya*²⁴ it is stated that '*yadeva vidyayā karoti śraddhāyopaniṣadā tadeva vīryavattaram bhavati*'. Whatever is performed with knowledge, faith and meditation becomes more effective. Commenting on the text quoted above *acārjya* Śamkara says "*daṣṣaṁ hi loke vanik saivarayohi padmarāgaḍamanivikraye vanijo vijñānadhukjāt phalādhukjam*".

It is a matter of common knowledge that when a dealer in precious stones and a forester sell pieces of ruby and other gems the former (who knows the real nature of gems) always makes a huge profit which is not the case with the latter (who is ignorant). It has further been stated in the same *Upaniṣad*

*brahma śarirasya vidyaya—janayitvat itaro pi hi pita
śarīramātram janayati*

The teacher who helps us to understand the truth is the spiritual father as distinct from father responsible for physical birth.

23 S U 6 23

*Yasya deve parā bhaktir Yathā devetātha gurau
tasyaite kṛtā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mādātmanah*

24 C U , 11 10

“that without faith a man cannot even think or meditate. Without thinking one does not understand²⁵. The teacher is to be revered for he helps in the elevation and growth of the mind of the pupil. The *Bhāgavad-gītā* gives the following practical advice as to the different modes of approaching the teacher to unravel the supreme truth :

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ* (4-34)

Learn that by obeisance, queries and by service. Those who are wise and experienced in philosophical truths will instruct thee in knowledge.

True wisdom can be attained from the great teacher by reverence, interrogation and service to him. In other words humility (i.e., falling at the feet), investigation or repeated questions and service are the conditions precedent for achievement of the knowledge. Further, in the same text we find that only those who are disciplined, compassionate and have a desire to serve are capable of understanding the essence of what is taught by the teacher :

*idante nātapaskūya nābhaktāya kadūcana
na cāśuśrūsava vācyaṁ na ca māṁ yo'bhyasūyati*

(*The Bhagavadgītā* 18-67)

All the *Dharmaśāstrakāras* like Manu, Gautama, Vasiṣṭha and others put great emphasis in unequivocal term on the importance of reverence and obedience necessary on the part of a student for the realisation of truth in life.

The stories of Satyakāma, Uddālaka, Utanka, Upamanyu and others give us a glimpse of the place of reverence and obedience in the scheme of *Upaniṣadic* education. A vast store of information regarding the real nature of the pure knowledge is revealed to those seekers of truth who have absolute reverence and faith either in the *śāstras* or in the *guru*. So says the *Bhagavadgītā*—

"*śraddhāṇ labhate jñānam tatparaḥ samyatendriyaḥ*"

(4 39)

The man who is full of faith, who is devoted to it, and who is of controlled senses attains wisdom, faith, devotion and discipline are necessary for attaining wisdom

The ideal of the teacher was not only to educate ardent students, but people at large and hence they could enjoy an unassailable position in the society

The Teacher was Remarkable for His Humility

Although the teacher was held in high esteem in the society he did not indulge in vanity and pride of his position. He was all the more renowned and remarkable for his humility

Since almost all of the *Upaniṣadic* teachers were themselves philosophers a great number of them felt justified in invoking some measure of authority. But then they never pretended themselves to be all-knowing. They were fully aware of their limitations and felt no hesitation in expressing their shortcomings. We are informed in the *Prañopaniṣad* that when six disciples approached, with high aspiration, the great sage Pippalāda to solve their problem, he replied, "Live with me another year with austerity, chastity and faith. When you ask us question according to your desire, and if we know we shall indeed tell you that"²⁶ This shows not only a real academic spirit but also a true modesty which is characteristic of a real scholar and seeker of truth

In the *Chūndogya*²⁷ we find that when five sages approached Uddālaka for instruction concerning the *Āsman* and the *Brahman*, he realised that he did not have the requisite knowledge to tell them all that they might ask and therefore, he recommended another expounder viz., king Aśvapati to them for solution of their problem. This also shows that there was

26. *Prañna*, 1 2 "*jñān ha sa pśīruvāca-bhūya eva tapasā brahmacar-jepa śraddhayā samvatsareṁ samvatsyatha yathā kāmam prajñān pṛcchata yadi vijñāsyāmoḥ sarveṁ ha vo vakṣyāma*"

27. C.U., 5 II 1, 2, 3, 4

no false pretension of scholarship amongst the spiritual teachers of the *Upanisadic* age.

In the convocation address of the *Taittirīya*²⁸ referred to in chapter second a piece of advice bespeaks the humility, simplicity and also magnanimity of the preceptor. The preceptor says, we are but frail mortals and are not immune from weakness. It is just possible that in spite of the restraint we exercise over ourselves, knowingly or unknowingly we may be guilty of lapses. It is not given to us to be perfect and the least of us sometimes do acts that are questionable. 'To err is human'. It is your duty to honour us and respect us, but you must be careful to model your conduct on those actions of ours which are proper and must on no account imitate our failings or imperfections. And when there come *Bhāhmanas* that are spiritually superior to us you should do all in your power to show respect to them, you should offer them seats and help them to get rid of their fatigue. From this it can be well conceived that the teachers advised the students that the latter should listen, with respect and veneration, to those who were superior to them and that the teachers' failings should not be imbibed at any manner.

The Moral Obligations of the Teacher

The teacher who is the wise man is morally bound to render his duty towards his disciples who are residing with him at his residence. In the *Mundakopanīṣad*²⁹ it is stated that a teacher is to teach his student the truth exactly as he knows it :

"*Provāca tam tattvato brahmasīdyūm*", where upon Śaṅkara says, '*ācāryasyāpaṇameva nyāmo yat nyāyaprapñasacchītya-nīstaranamaśīdyamahodadheh*'.

It is the duty of the preceptor to help the deserving pupil who has approached him in the prescribed manner and whose mind has been tranquilized, to cross the great ocean of ignorance.

28. T.E. I 11-2, 3-4.

29. M.U. 1-2-11.

In the *Prañnopaniṣad*³⁰ thus states the sage Pippalāda, "thus far, indeed, I know the *Supreme Reality*" indicating thereby that he has totally exhausted the stock of his knowledge and has left nothing to himself

Further in the same *Upaniṣad*, it is held that the teacher should not conceal anything from his student, for such concealment would bring about ruin to him—' *samulo va eṣa pariśus jati yo'nṣtamabhiṣadati, tasmānndṛhāmyanṣatam iaktum* ' ³¹ Śaṅkara says, "ato nyayata upasannyāya jogyaḥ jānata vidyā iaktavyaḥ, anṣtaṇa na iaktavyaḥ sarvasvapi avasthasu ity etat siddham bhavati "

The teacher should neither communicate any wrong information nor conceal anything from a deserving student who has approached him by following the prescribed procedure

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*³² it is said that *brahmanah paṇḍityam nirvidya bālīyena tiṣṭhaṣet* A *Brāhmaṇa* having mastered self knowledge should live innocent like a child shorn of vanity of scholarship This indicates of state of simplicity and intuitional understanding required of a teacher

Again, in the same *Upaniṣad* we are informed by Yajña valkya during the course of his discourse with king Janaka that a teacher should not accept any gift without having instructed the pupil, ' *śiṣyaḥ kṣṛtārthamakṛtī śiṣyāt dhanam na haretī mama pitamanyata* ' This shows the moral obligation expected of a teacher

Source of Education Types of Teachers

We shall now turn our attention to another important aspect of education viz the source from which the students receive their education At the outset it may be mentioned that the fathers play an important role in educating their children The father who normally performs the initiatory ceremony of the children introduces them to the study of the *vedas* The

30 *Prañna*, 6-7

tān hoṣā a eṣādevadhmetat param Brahma veḥa māṣa para masti it

31 *Prañna*, 6.1

32 *B U*, 3.5.1

students not only receive their education from their fathers but from other teacher as well. While some of them receive from both the sources as Śvetaketu does as per evidence of the *Chāndogyā*.

Father As Teacher

Uddālaka, (The son of Aruṇa) asks his son "Śvetaketu, go and live as a student under a teacher, for there is none in our family who, not studying the *vedas* live the life of a 'brahma-bandhu', i.e., nominal *Brāhmaṇa* or fallen *Brāhmin*"³³ On the advice of his father Śvetaketu goes to his teacher at the age of twelve, and comes back at the age of twenty-four 'having studied all the *Vedas*, highly conceited, considering himself well read and arrogant'. On finding his son so conceited, well-versed and arrogant the father asks him as to whether he has asked (his teacher) for that instruction by which 'the unheard becomes heard, the unthought becomes thought, and the unknown becomes known' to which Śvetaketu replies "How can there be such an instruction, Sir?"³⁴

Uddālaka knows that his son has yet to learn and realise the *Supreme Truth* (which is *Brahman*) and so sage Āruni begins to teach his son the true nature of the *Universal Spirit* in beautiful similes and practical demonstrations.

In the *Taittirīya*³⁵ we find that Bhṛgu approaches his father, Varuṇa, to receive the knowledge of the *Universal Spirit*. The father-cum-preceptor gives a definition of the *Universal Spirit* i.e., *Brahman* as "That from which all beings here are born, having been born, by which they remain alive and unto which they return ultimately".

33. C.U., 6-1-1, Śvetaketurhārweya āsa, tam ha pitovāca, Śvetaketu, vasa brahmacaryam, na va, Saumyasmatkuliro' nreṇya brahman-bandhuriva bhavati.

34. C.U., 6-1-3 "vedaśrutam śrutam bhavatyematmā mṛteṇa vijñātam; katham nu, bhagavaḥ, sa ādeśo bhavati.

35. T.U., 3-1-1 "yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jivanti, yet prajānyabhisamṛtsanti tad vijñā savva tad brahma.

The father advises the pupil to discover the principle through personal exploration by way of reflection and meditation on the media of reaching that *Supreme Truth*. The father exhorts him to continue meditation and inquiry till the discovery that *Brahman is Ānanda* is made after which the teacher stops advising further search. The father Varuṇa guides Bhṛgu stage by stage from the grossest medium *Annam* or matter to the subtlest medium *Āna ida* or Bliss.

In section three of the chapter fifth of the *Chandogya*³⁶ we find that Śvetaketu the grandson of Aruṇa once came to the assembly of the Pañcīla King Pravahana, the son of Jivala inquired of him 'My boy has your father instructed you (properly)'. The boy replied 'Indeed he has'. From this inquiry made by Pravahana it can be inferred that the fathers also imparted instruction to their children in the Vedic age. In the *Bṛhadaranyaka*³⁷ also the same episode appears. From this also it is inferred that the father takes charge of the education of his son.

In the first chapter of the *Kaustika*³⁸ we are informed that Śvetaketu was asked by his father to go and perform the sacrifice at the place of Citra Gargyaṣṭhi where the latter asked him about transmigration and reincarnation. Then Śvetaketu said, "I know it not. However let me ask the teacher." Then he went to his father and asked 'Thus he asked me. How should I answer?' This passage also lends support to the view that fathers play the role of a teacher.

Aṣṭriya as Teacher

In some of the older *Upaniṣads* we find references that the *Brāhmana* went to the *Aṣṭriya* as student to receive knowledge from them. It is perhaps due to the fact the *Aṣṭriya* developed

36 CU 3.3.1 Śvetaketu itāruṇeṣṭh pāñcīlūrām samīlmeṣṭhā tam ha pravahano jivalaḥ svāta kumārānu i āśīyat pī dyaṇu hi ēha gava itī

37 BU 6.2.1.10

38 KU 1

a new kind of speculation which was still unknown to the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Kṣatriyas* carried this newly developed knowledge with earnestness and success for a long time. Many *Kṣatriya* kings acquired wide renown for possession of *Brahma-vidyā* or knowledge par excellence.

In the *Chāndogya*³⁹ we find that Gautama (Aruna) a *Brāhmaṇa* went to the assembly of king Pravāhana a *Kṣatriya* to receive the higher knowledge from him. The king was perturbed at the thought that the knowledge received in succession by a *Kṣatriya* should not be imparted to the *Brāhmaṇa*. Moreover, it is not proper for a *Kṣatriya* to instruct a *Brāhmaṇa* because the position of *ācārya* or teacher was wholly delegated to the *Brāhmins*. The king, however, asked him to stay with him for a long time and at the end of the period he imparted to him the instructions as desired. We are told by Pravāhana that Āruṇi was the first man among the *Brāhmaṇas* to receive this spiritual wisdom and till then it was the *Kṣatriya* caste that reigned supreme in this sphere of knowledge.

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*⁴⁰ we are told that Gautama went to Pravāhana with the desire of living as a student under him to receive the spiritual wisdom. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (2-6-2-1) Janaka, the king of *Videha* was a renowned *Kṣatriya* teacher who explained to the *Brāhmaṇas* the doctrine of *Agnihotra*.

Again in the *Kauṣṭaki*⁴¹ we find that Āruṇi approached the king Citra Gīrgyāyaṇi, fuel in hand i.e., in a humble way and received the instruction in spiritual knowledge from him.

Then again in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*⁴² and the *Kauṣṭaki*⁴³ we find that Gīrgya Bālīki, the proud *Brāhmaṇa* went to king Ajītaśatru, the king of *Kāśi* to receive spiritual knowledge, in a humble manner with fuel in hand and obtained the desired

39. C.U., 537.

40. B.U., 6-24.

41. K. U., 11.

42. B.U., 21-15.

43. K.U., 41-19.

instruction Although Ajātaśatru at first told him that it was against the prevalent practice that a *Kṣatriya* should instruct a *Brahmin* in spiritual matters

In the *Chāndogya*⁴⁴ we find that a group of five *Brāhmaṇas* approached Asvapati Kaikeya to receive the Supreme wisdom from him

Further in the *Chāndogya*⁴⁵ we find that Nārada a reputed *Brāhmaṇa* went to Sanatkumara the god of war for receiving the spiritual wisdom from him

Regarding the superiority of *Kṣatriyalood* over the Brahminhood different scholars have advanced different views R C Dutta observes that Learned Kshatriyas who became disgusted with the pretensions of really ignorant priest must have given a start these to heal their speculations or at least carried them on with vigour and success until *Brahmans* who were wise in their own esteem felt their inferiority and came to them to learn something of the wisdom of the new school And although there is much in the speculation of the new school which after the lapse of nearly three thousand years appear to us to be grotesque or fanciful still it is impossible not to be struck with the vigour the earnestness and the originality which characterises the *Upaniṣads*⁴⁶ According to Macdonell and Keith the cases of *Brahmanas* receiving education from *Kṣatriyas* has little or no significance for the priests would naturally represent their patrons as interested in their sacred science It is thus not necessary to see in these notices any real and independent study on the part of the Kshatriyas⁴⁷ In any case says Dr R K Mukherjee the stories refer only to a few selected *Kṣatriyas* of high rank while there is no evidence that

44 CU 5 11 1 2

45 Ibid 7 1

46 R C. Dutta *A History of Ancient India* (Calcutta Thacker Spink & Co 1891) p 204

47 Macdonell & Keith *Vedic Index II* (Delhi Motilal Banarasi Press 1954) p 87

the average *Kshatriya* was concerned with intellectual pursuits. The people who are represented to us as studying and disputing, are normally *Brāhmins*, the bearers par excellence, of Hindu Culture; the kings are few and far between and much of their fame seems to have been due to their generosity in regard to gifts.⁴⁸

The scholar of name and fame R. D. Ranade steers a middle course avoiding the two extreme opinions and gives the sanest decision in this disputed matter. He observes ".....it would seem that the Brahmins did very often maintain their intellectual and spiritual superiority. It must be remembered however, that occasionally a Kshatriya, and occasionally a Brahmin, would be the intellectual and spiritual head of his age according to his abilities and powers, and that one charter was given either to Brahminhood or Kshatriahood that it alone should be the repository of intellectual and spiritual wisdom, and that, therefore, it would be ridiculous to argue, on the one hand, that the Brahmins alone, or on the other, that the Kshatriyas alone, were the custodians of spiritual culture, and thus, as in modern times, even a man belonging to the lowest order of society could, if he possessed the necessary ability and means, be in the vanguard of those who knew."⁴⁹

The *Maitri Upaniṣad* sounds a note of warning. It gives a description of various classes of false teachers—with whom one should not associate, viz., those who are always hilarious, always abroad, always begging; and continually living upon handicrafts; those who are going out begging in towns and those who are wicked, who display their braids of hair and adopt mendicancy, those who allay the influence of evil spirit for money, those who impose on the people by wearing the red robe, earrings and skull and lastly, those teachers who practise deception by the jugglery of false argument in cycles and epicycles and by the use of false and illogical examples.⁵⁰

48. Dr. R. K. Mukherjee - *Ancient Indian Education*, 4th ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969), p. 104.

49. R. D. Ranade - *Constructive Survey of the Upaniṣadic Philosophy* (Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1926) p. 63

50. *Maitri*, 7-9.

Prominent Teachers of the Upanisadic Age

In this chapter we propose to give a brief account of the representative teachers of the *Upanisadic* age who were largely responsible for the promotion of learning and culture during and after the period of their existence. They exerted immense influence and contributed much towards the development of the *Vedic* civilization in India. Their names will be presented here in alphabetical sequence.

Ajātaśatru—He was a king of *Kāśī* who though a *Āsatriya* possessed advanced knowledge of *Brahma*; and appeared as one of the learned teachers of the day. He taught *Bālaki*, a proud *Brahmin* of the Garga clan. *Bālaki* went to Ajātaśatru to impart instruction in *Brahma*; but his knowledge was imperfect and therefore his exposition became ineffective. He then approached Ajātaśatru seeking enlightenment. Ajātaśatru was jealous of his contemporary Janaka, a well known learned king who could collect in his court all the learned scholars of the day by his generous patronage (BU 2.1.1). Ajātaśatru was versed in *Brahmavidya* and gave discourses on *Brahman*. Thereby he wanted to prove that he too was no less a lover of knowledge than Janaka.

Atidhanvan Śaunaka—Atidhanvan, the son of Śunaka, who was well versed in the science of *Udgitha*, taught the same to his pupil Udara Śāṇḍilya and said so long as

this knowledge of the *Udgītha* continues among your descendants, their life in the world will be progressively higher and better than ordinary lives and in that other world also their state will be similar (C.U., 1-9-3).

Abhipratārin Kākṣaseni— Abhipratārin, the son of Kākṣasena was once sitting with Śaunaka, the son of Śunaka of *Kapi gotra* at meals. Then a religious student asked them for food. They did not give him anything for they knew him to be proud of his knowledge of Brahman. This they did just to test what he was going to say (C.U., 4-3-5). Thereafter they gave him food.

Aruṇa Aupavesi Gautama— He was the son of Upaveśa and a famous teacher, and the father of Uddālaka, one of the foremost teacher of the *Upaniṣadic* age. Once he approached king Aśvapati Kaikeya for instruction on a spiritual matter (B.U., 6-5-3).

Aśvapati Kaikeya—Though a *Kṣatriya* king he was well known as a learned teacher of the age. As an ideal king he could boast, "In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man without a sacrificial fire, no ignorant person, no adulterer, much less an adulteress" (C.U., 5-11-5). He was a wise administrator and expert in the science of the Universal self (*Vaiśānara-self*). In the *Chāndogya* (5-11-7) it is stated that five great householders and learned scholars of name and fame viz., Prācīnaśāla Aupanaśyava, Satyayajña Pauluṣi, Indra-dyumna Bhāllaveya, Jana Śarkarakṣya and Buḍiḷa Āsvatarāśvi headed by Uddālaka Āruṇi approached him for instruction regarding the science of the *Vaiśānara Self*. King Aśvapati was regarded as an authority on the subject during his life time. It was declared by Uddālaka Āruṇi, "Venerable Sirs, Aśvapati Kaikeya studies at present this Universal self, well, let us go to him" (C.U., 5-11-4). Aśvapati, the king of Kekayas explained to these great Brāhmin theologicians that *Vaiśānara* is the *Ultimate Self* comprehending the entire universe as His form who is to be meditated upon as a totality and not in His fractional manifestations.

Aśvala—He was the priest of Janaka the king of Videha. He was considered to be an authority at the sacrifice of *Aśvamedha* to which Janaka, emperor of Videha, invited the *Brahmanas* from *Kuru* and *Pañcala*. The king wanted to know who was the most learned among those *Brahmanas* and to him he promised to offer gifts lavishly. Yājñavalkya entered the learned assembly, asserted his superiority, and directed his disciple to take away the gifts. Thereupon the invoking priest Aśvala resolved to question Yājñavalkya how he could assert that he was the greatest *Vedic* scholar amongst them. Thus Aśvala was able to test the superiority of Yājñavalkya by putting some appropriate questions in that assembly of scholars that gathered together from different parts of the country (B U, 3 1 2 & 10).

Āruneya Śvetaketu or **Auddalaki Śvetaketu** was the son of Uddālaka and the grandson of Aruṇa. In *Chāndogya* (6 1 2), we find that he started his student career at the age of twelve which lasted for twelve years. Thus having studied all the *Vedas* he returned at the age of twentyfour from his preceptor, puffed up with his learning when he was asked some questions by his father, he was unable to answer them. Thereupon he wanted to know from his father how the knowledge of one thing could include the knowledge of everything else. Thus he became the student of his father. Then the father removed the perplexity and satisfied his curiosity by enlightening him on the doctrine of *Sat* or *Final Reality* he discussed at length the problem of causation (C U, 6 1 1). On another occasion we find that he went to the assembly of Pañcāla where he was unable to give answer to any of the five questions put to him by the king Pravāhaṇa Jaivali (C U 5 3 1). He however received some instructions from Pravāhaṇa Jaivali who was his contemporary. He was also a contemporary of Janaka emperor of Videha whom he met while travelling about with two other companions and took part in the discussion started by the king. We find that on some other occasion he entered into a discussion with Yājñavalkya in which he was defeated.

Uddalaka Āruni—He was the son of Aruṇa Aupareṇi Gautama and father of Śvetaketu. He was one of the greatest

philosophical teachers of the *Upaniṣadic* age. His contribution to the different aspects of philosophy, metaphysics, psychology and cosmology paved the way for the development of many new theories and doctrines at the hand of his illustrious contemporary Yājñavalkya who is reported to be his disciple. It is of course true that Yājñavalkya by his extra-ordinary erudition was capable to defeat his teacher Āruṇi at the court of Janaka (B. U., 6-3-7 and 3-7-23). The repeated instruction of "*Tat-tvam-asi*" to his son Śvetaketu contains the culmination of the philosophical vision of Uddālaka (C. U., 6-8).

Upakosala Kāmalāyana—He was a student of Satyakāma who stayed in the house of his teacher tending his fires for twelve years. Satyakāma did not perform the ceremony of completing studies and returning home for Upakosala (C. U., 4-10-1). Satyakāma was confident that Upakosala will be directly instructed by the sacred fires and in fact, he received instruction from the three fires (C. U., 4-14-1). Ultimately the teacher imparted the teaching to his disciple concerning the *Ultimate Reality* which was to be found neither in the sun, nor in the moon, nor in the lightening, but in the image of the person reflected in the human eyes. Thereafter he himself became a teacher.

Uṣasti Cākrāyana—Uṣasti, the son of Cakra was one of the disputants at the court of Janaka on the occasion of the latter's horse sacrifice, *Aśamedha*, who tried to assail the superiority asserted by Yājñavalkya. Thus he went on asking questions about the *Sarvāntara Ātmā* and Yājñavalkya went on answering them in different ways. Lastly Yājñavalkya said, "you cannot see the seer of sight, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thought, you cannot know the knower of knowledge. This is *Sarvāntara Ātmā* that is within all. Everything else is perishable." Hearing this Uṣasti kept quiet (B. U., 3-4-4).

In the *Chāndogya* he is introduced as being wandering about with his young wife when the corns had been destroyed by hail-storms resulting in famine until he presented himself at the sacrifice of the king where he argued with the other priests

and defeated them. The king chose him to be the chief priest (C U, 1-10 1).

Kahola Kauṣītaki or Kauṣītakeya—Kahola, the son of Kauṣītaka was one of the disputants at the court of Janaka. He wanted to know the practical way to the realisation of the real nature of the self (B U 3 5 1).

Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra—He is introduced as a student of the reputed teacher Gṛhira Āṅgīrasa who expounded to him the particular view of sacrifice by a comparative study between the life of the sacrificer and the life of a common man. The teacher expounded that "At the time of the end a man must take refuge in these three thoughts- (1) *akṣitamasi* (Thou art the indestructible), (2) *acrytamasi* (thou art the Unchangeable), *prāṇa samsitamasi* (Thou art the very edge of life) to Kṛṣṇa who became satisfied and never thirsted again for further knowledge (C U, 3 17-6).

Kauravyāṇi putra—He was a philosophical teacher who was the exponent of the doctrine of *akāśa* or ether-*Brahman* which is equated with *Om* (B U, 5 1-1).

Kauṣītaki—He was a wellknown philosopher teacher and an inventor of the doctrine of *prāṇa* as *Brahman* the *Ultimate Reality*. He was known to be the ancient '*Satyagrahi*'. He practised the virtue of non begging and expounded the doctrine of the 'Three Meditation' for the fulfilment of some desires (K U, 2 1).

Gardabhīṣipīta—Bharadvāja—He was a descendant of Bharadvāja who instructed Janaka the doctrine that '*Śrotra is Brahman*', but Yājñavalkya refuted this theory by pointing out its limitations. (B U, 4 1 5).

Gārgī Vācakanvi—she was perhaps the only woman member of the circle of the disputants who raised objection to the superiority asserted by Yājñavalkya at the court of Janaka on the occasion of *Aśvamedha*. Gārgī being fully armed with the art of intellectual warfare, dared to contest with Yājñavalkya even at the court of Janaka where a number of great philosophers of the day gathered together. She said to the assembled

Brahmanas, "with your permission, revered Sirs, I desire to ask him (Yājñavalkya) two questions. If he answers them, none among you will be able to score victory over this philosopher." Thus she asked those two questions like the two arrows coming from the bows of the kings of Kāśī and Videha. Yājñavalkya solved both the riddles. On hearing the answers from Yājñavalkya she stopped questioning and said to the *Brahmanas*, "Revered Sirs, you should consider yourselves fortunate if you can get your release from him through salutations. Never shall any of you be able to vanquish this great philosopher" (B U, 6-1-8 and 12)

Glāva Maitreya—the son of Mitrā who was also known by the name of *Vaka*, the son of Dalbha. He got these two names for being Dvyāmusyāna—born of two families (one by birth and another by adoption). He is introduced as going out for *Vedic* study in connection with the Udgītha of the dogs (C U, 1-12)

Citra Gārgāyani or Gāngyāyani—He was a well known teacher to whom Śvetaketu and his father Aruna went for higher *Vedic* Study (*Kaustika*, 1-1)

Caikitāneya Brahmadatta—Brahmadatta, a great grandson of Cikitāna is introduced in the topic that vital force was to be established as no other than the *Udgītha* itself (B U, 1-3-25)

Jana Śarṅgārākṣya—He was one of the five great theologians who under the leadership of Uddālaka Āruṇi went to Aśvapati, the king of Kekaya for the specialised knowledge of the *Vaisṇānara Self* (C U., 5-11-1).

Janaka Videha—Janaka, the emperor of Videha, was one of the most prominent figures in Hindu religious and philosophical literature and was called a *Rajarṣi* or royal sage. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* we find that his court was virtually the centre of *Vedic* culture and civilization. It was, in fact, the resort of the wise and the learned of those days, for receiving and imparting instruction in *Brahma-vidyā*, his discussions with Yājñavalkya, the greatest philosopher of the day amply indicate that he was able to meet the sage on equal terms. Reference has been made to Janaka in B U, 3-1-1, 4-1-1, 2-1, 4-7;

5 14 8 *Kaustiki* 4 1 etc , from these references we see that discussion method of instruction was used and a number of well known teachers of the day took part in discussing the different aspects of *Brahma vidya*. Amongst them Yājñavalkya was the foremost though he himself once received instruction from Janaka. Janaka who himself was an ardent lover of philosophical and spiritual wisdom was impressed with Yājñavalkya's profound erudition and God realisation so much so that he went to the extent of declaring at the end Venerable Sir, I give you the dominion of Videha and myself too with it for your (spiritual) service (B U 4-4 23)

Jaratkarava Ārtabhaga—He is introduced as one of the disputant with Yājñavalkya at the court of Janaka (B U 3 2). He was interested in eschatology and entered into the intellectual debate regarding a profound problem with the great philosopher Yājñavalkya the latter wanted to discuss the issue in private. Thus they entered into a conversation about the nature of *Karma* and finally arrived at the conclusion that a man becomes holy by holy actions and sinful by sinful actions (B U, 3 2 13)

Jitvān Śālini—Jitvān the son of Śālini who taught Janaka that the organ of speech is verily *Brahman* which was further elucidated by Yājñavalkya (B U 4 1 2)

Taponitya Pauruṣīti—He is introduced as one of the three moralists mentioned in *Taittiriya*. He insisted upon the virtue of penance. According to whom there can be no highest virtue than that of penance in man's life.

Trisanku—A well known sage teacher who uttered his *Vedantamucana* expressive of post illuminational discourse or in consonance with his mystical illumination (T U 1 10). He was one of the mystical philosopher and a man of great insight.

Nāka Maudgalya—He was one of the prominent teachers who propounded the theory that study of the *Vedas* was the supreme virtue. According to him there can be no virtue higher than that of the study and teaching of the sacred books and this constituted the highest perarce (T U, 1 3)

Nārada—Nārada, the spiritual disciple who received instructions from Sanatkumāra regarding the doctrine of *Prāṇa* which is regarded as the very navel of existence. Nārada, the ardent seeker of truth implored Sanatkumāra to initiate him into spiritual wisdom leading to self realisation. From the conversation of Nārada and Sanatkumāra it has been made explicitly clear that mere intellectual equipment cannot lead to the realisation of the Self and the distinction between *aparā-vidyā* and *parā-vidyā* and the way of knowledge and the way of realisation is clearly drawn (C.U., 7-1-2- & 3).

Patañcala Kāpya—He was a famous teacher in the land of the Madra. His specialised knowledge of the science of sacrifice attracted ever such reputed scholars like Uddālaka Āruni and Bhuhyu Lāhyāyani (B.U., 3-3-1 ; 7-1).

Pippalāda—He was one of the reputed teachers of the *Praśna Upaniṣad* (1-1) who employed the synthetical method. Six spiritual students went to Pippalāda with fuel in their hands seeking spiritual wisdom. The six students were Sukeśā, Satya-kāma, Sauryāyani, Kausalya, Vaidarbhi and Kabandhī who were themselves devoted to *Brahman*, but the teacher insisted on their staying with him for a year observing penance and abstinence to qualify themselves for instruction. Pippalāda made a synthesis of the six psycho-metaphysical questions put to him by the said six sages. Pippalāda was a psycho-metaphysician of repute and was an exponent of the doctrine of *Ravi* and *Prāṇa* the notion of a duality of primary existences (*Praśna*, 1-3 to 13). He was also well known for the doctrines of the supremacy of vital breath above the senses. He also taught the importance of the meditation on *Om* for realising the all pervading *Purusa*.

Pravāhaṇa Jaivali—He was one of the *Kṣatriya* teachers of the *Upaniṣadic* age, (C.U., 5-3-5). He is known as *Rājanya-bandhu*. Though not a *brāhmaṇa* he appears as one who knows the true meaning and significance of *Udgītha* and his instruction was sought by noted *brāhmaṇa* scholars like Śvetaketu Āruṇeya and his father Uddālaka (B.U., 6-2-1 to 7). He was a distinguished scholar in the Academy of Pāñcāla (C.U., 5-3-1). He was

famous for his celebrated doctrine of "Five Fires" special knowledge of *Udgītha* (i.e., *Om*). He was also a specialist in the subject of *eschatology* i.e., the mystery of life, death, reincarnation and immortality of the soul. He put five questions to Śvetaketu and his father on the subject of eschatology which they could not answer.

Barku Vārṣṇa—Barku, the son of Vṛṣṇa was a teacher in the (B.U., 4-1-4) who taught Janaka Videha the doctrine that the *Caḥṣu* (sight) verily is *Brahman*

Buḍila Āśvatarāśvi—He was one of those six *brāhmanas* who had a discussion with king Āśvapati Kaikeya on 'What is our *Ātman*', what is *Brahman*. Then Āśvapati explained to them the nature of the *Ātman* as the *Vaiśānara Ātman* which is to be meditated upon (C.U., 5-11-1 & 16). In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, we find him putting questions to Janaka Videha on the knowledge of the *Gāyatrī*. (5-14-8).

Bhujyu Lāhyāni—Bhujyu, the grandson of Lahya was one of the disputants who questioned the intellectual superiority claimed by Yājñavalkya at the *Āśvamedha* sacrifice of Janaka, the emperor of Videha. While he was a student he went to the country of Madra and came to the house of Patañcala (B.U., 3-1-1)

Mahidāsa Aitareya—He was a distinguished teacher, who attained the status of a great sage by his own austerity. The *Brāhmana* and the *Āraṇyaka*—known by the title *Aitareya* are attributed to Mahidāsa Aitareya. According to *Chāndogya* (3-16-7) he lived to the age of 116. According to Sāyanācārya Mahidāsa was the son of a woman called Itarā.

Maitreyī—She was the spiritual wife of the great sage Yājñavalkya and was conversant with *Brahman* (i.e., *Brahmanā-dinī*). In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* we find the celebrated conversation between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī while the former wanted to make a partition of his estate between his two wives, Kātyāyāni and Maitreyī on the eve of his renouncing the householder's life. Then Maitreyī asked him whether even the greatest wealth

could make her immortal '*amṛta*'. Yājñavalkya answered in the negative and said that her life in that case would be just a life that of people having plenty of things but there is no hope of immortality through wealth. Then Maitreyī said. "What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal? And she insisted on his giving her instruction in spiritual wisdom. The teaching of Yājñavalkya to Maitreyī centres round the thought that the *Ātman* is the highest object of man's life and that is the Reality by knowing which every thing else is known.

Maitrī was a famous sage teacher and a great God-realist, who imparted instruction to his disciple Śākāyanya. He was famous as an exponent of the highest secret of the *Upaniṣads* (*Maitrī*, 2-1-3).

Yājñavalkya—He figures as the outstanding philosopher of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and undoubtedly the greatest philosopher of the *Upaniṣadic* age. Uddālaka was his teacher from whom he received instruction on the doctrine of *Mantha* (B.U., 6-3-7). But he defeated his own *guru* Uddālaka in a disputation with him held in the assembly of scholars of the entire *kurupañcāla* country (B.U., 3-7-1) which was summoned by Janaka, the emperor of Videha, in connection with his celebration of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. In that assembly Yājñavalkya had to face a formidable number of intellectual contestants. The sages that challenged the superiority in knowledge claimed by Yājñavalkya were Hotāśvala, Jāratkarava Ārtabhaga, Bhuju Lāhyāyani, Usasta, Kahola, Uddālaka, Gārgī and Śākalya. In fact, the sages knew the answers but they wanted to find out whether Yājñavalkya also knew them. Each of the sages put several questions to Yājñavalkya but the redoubtable scholar managed to maintain his superiority against all the renowned scholars of the day. It was interesting to note that Gārgī Vācaknavī, the learned lady entered into disputation with Yājñavalkya at the end of which she publicly declared before the assembly "Venerable *Brāhmanas*, you should consider it enough if you can get off from him with a salutation. Certainly none of you can ever defeat him in expounding *Brahman*."

At the end Yājñavalkya said "Revered *Brahmanas* any one amongst you who desires may question me, or all of you may do so, Or I may question any one amongst you who (so) wishes, or I may ask all of you" The *Brahmans* did not dare to question any more and remained silent. Thus Yājñavalkya was able to hold his own and justify his initial appropriation of the prize of victory offered by king Janaka, viz, a thousand cows bedecked, with gold when he said to his own pupil 'Samaśravas drive these cows (honor), my son' (B U , 3 1-2)

On another occasion Janaka, rose from his lounge and humbly approaching Yājñavalkya as his formal *guru* asked to impart him instruction, for otherwise he would not accept any gift which the king would like to make. Then Yājñavalkya after testing the knowledge of the king which he received already from the other teachers began delivering his discourse on *Brahman* at the end of which the king said, 'Sir, I am offering you my kingdom together with myself as a follower (B U , 4 2-4) It may be mentioned here that Yājñavalkya himself once received instruction from Janaka in respect of *Agnihotra*

Yājñavalkya had two wives, Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī, the former being his spiritual partner and the latter was worldly wise. Yājñavalkya became anxious to renounce the world and adopt the life of a mendicant, he desired to make a partition of his estate between his two wives before he actually retired from the world to spend the last days of life in the solitude of the forest.

Raikva—He was the teacher who came to Jānaśruti to teach *Brahmanudya*. Jānaśruti was a pious king who practised the kingly virtues to perfection. As he had no knowledge of *Brahman* he taught that mere goodness without spiritual wisdom is of no avail for it cannot take a man to the highest goal of life. Being pleased with his goodness some supernatural beings managed to make him aware of the presence of Raikva—a sage of the neighbourhood. The king sought him out and offered him 600 cows, a necklace and a carriage with mules but the sage refused his prayer and called him *śūdra*. Thereafter the king enhanced

his gifts by offering 1000 cows, a necklace, a carriage with mules and his own daughter whereupon the sage consented to teach him and did so by imparting the instruction that *Vāyu* (air) and *prāṇa* (breath) are to be meditated upon as *Brahman*.

Śilaka Śālāvatya—He was one of the teachers mentioned along with *Caikitāyana Dālbhya* and *Pravāhana Jaivali* who were all well versed in the science of *Udgūtha*. They once entered into a discussion where *Pravāhana* remained first as spectator and then took part in it. He proved his superiority over the *Brahmins* and taught them the significance of the said science (C.U., 1-8).

Saunaka - A common patronymic.

Satyakāma Jābāla—Once *Satyakāma* went to his mother and said, "Mother I want to lead the life of a student in the house of a preceptor. Please tell me to what family I belong". The mother said, "I do not know to what family you belong. I have obtained you in my youth, while I was serving many masters as maid. Therefore, I do not know of what family you are. My name is *Jābālā* and your name is *Satyakāma*. So you may introduce yourself as *Satyakāma Jābāla*."

The boy then went to *Hāridrumata Gautama* and said, "Sir, I would like to practise *brahmacarya* at your place and have you as my teacher". *Gautama* asked, "Of what family are you, dear, ? *Satyakāma* then told the teacher what his mother actually told him and introduced himself as *Satyakāma Jābāla*. On hearing the story of *Satyakāma*, the teacher said, "You are a *Brāhmaṇa*, since you have not swerved from truth. Go therefore and bring sacrificial fuel, I shall initiate you into *brahmacarya*".

After initiating him the teacher asked him to take charge of four hundred lean, weak and poorly-fed cows and told him. "Take this whole lot of cows to the forest and do not return to the *āśrama* till they become a thousand". *Satyakāma* gracefully took the assignment, to live with the cows far away from the

āśrama When the cows became a thousand the bull told him about one portion of *Brahmana*. Then *Agni* told him the second portion. The swan told him the third portion. Then the fish told him the fourth portion. Reaching the *āśrama* Satyakama went to the teacher and bowed before him. The teacher received him with joy and said to him: 'Well dear, your face shines with the lustre of the sacred knowledge; you look like one who has known *Brahman*—who was it that taught you?' Satyakama said: 'I have known this not from human beings. So I like to hear more and all from you sir—because you are my teacher.' Then the teacher revealed to Satyakama the highest knowledge.

In course of time Satyakama himself became a great teacher and had a number of pupils under him. He had sent out from his hermit school disciple after disciple after the completion of their studies except one Upakosala Kamalayana by name whom he did not send out. His *samāvartan* ceremony was postponed for years together. Upakosala was instructed by the Lords of Fire first and finally by his teacher Satyakama himself.

The famous parable of the rivalry of the organs in which the *prāṇa* proves its superiority to the other vital organs is attributed to Satyakāma and this doctrine of *prāṇasamāda* was imparted by him to another pupil named Gośruti the son of Vyaghrapada (C U 5 2 3). In the *Bṛhadaranyaka* we find that Satyakama once became the teacher of Janaka, the emperor of Videha to whom he imparted the doctrine that *manas* (mind) is *Brahman* (B U 4 1 6). Again in the same *Upaniṣad* we find that Jānakī the son of Āyasthūṇa was one of the teachers of Satyakama to whom he imparted the doctrine of *Mantha* received from its originator Uddalaka Āruni through a series of teachers and pupils (B U 6 3 12).

Satyā Vaca Rāthītara—He was a famous teacher who held the view that truthfulness is an essential quality necessary for *brahmacārin* (T U, 1 9 1).

Sukeśin Bhāradvāja—Sukeśā of the clan of Bharadvāja was one of six *Brāhmanas* who approached the venerable Pīppalāda for instruction regarding the supreme *Brahman*. He joined the party as he failed to answer the question on the subject put to him by Hiraṇyābha, the prince of Kośala. Then the *Rṣi* (Pippalada) asked them to live again with him a year more in penance, abstinence and faith, on completion of their period of discipline he imparted the instruction on the subject of inquiry. (Praśna, 1-1-2 & 6-1).

The Students

The students of ancient India lived with their preceptor in his house as members of the same family. He is termed *antevasī* (resident student) i.e., a person who stays with his preceptor. The students irrespective of their status and rank in the society, are all equal in the eyes of their preceptor. The students during the period which is fixed at twelve years as minimum of their education in the *Upaniṣadic* age, serve their teacher with fidelity and follow his words with obedience and respect. In the *Chandogya*¹ it is stated

*'Upakośalo ha vai kamalaṅgaḥ satyākāme jibhāle
brahmacaryam āśa tasya ha dāḍṣa varṣanyagnin paricacāra
sa ha smānyanantevāsinaḥ samāvartayamīti samāhamaiva na
samāvartayati*

'Upakośalo Kiniliyāna dwelt with Satyākama Jabhāla as a student observing the vow of *brahmacarya*. For twelve years he tended his fires. Then although accustomed to allow other pupils to return home him he did not allow to return (to his home). The period seems to be prolonged to test the student's fitness to be the recipient of the desired knowledge.

The students ungrudgingly perform their duties assigned to them however difficult or menial it might be. They receive

their education free of charge but they look after the preceptor's cattle, his cow, tend his holy fire and beg food for his support. They collect sacred fuel from the forest for his sacrificial fire and procure water from the well for his bath. Thus the pupils are required to perform all the duties necessary for the maintenance of the domestic affairs of the teacher. The student, it may be mentioned, thus develop their limbs and muscles in doing physical labour at the teachers' house and also in the field under the sun. Their moral side is developed in the study of the religious text and active participation in the religious performances with the teachers. The intellectual side is developed in hearing the explanation of the religious hymns as also in the observation of nature. Thus the education affords to put emphasis on the different aspects of life of the students and to integrate them in a systematic way.

We are told of Śvetaketu in the *Chandogya*² that he has his studentship from twelve to twenty four

Sa ha dvadasavarṣa upetya caturvimsatavarṣaḥ sarvaṁ vedāddhītya mūhūrtān āśvamedhānāṁ śabdān evaṁ, tam ha pitavaca

The course of studentship lasts for twelve years, sometimes even thirtytwo years or for life. It commences at different ages for different classes of students. *Brahmana* youths commence their study between the ages of eight and sixteen, *Kṣatriya* eleven to twenty two, and *Vaiśyas* twelve to twenty four. In the *Upniṣadic* age we find that men at their advanced age also become the students. Thus old man like Āruni in the *Bṛhadaranyaka* (6 2-4) becomes the student of Pravāhana. In the *Mundaka* (1 1 3), we hear of a householder who goes to a great sage to learn the truth. In the *prasnopanīśad* (1 1) six men of quite an advanced age (except one) go to a teacher and become students for sometimes

In the *Chandogya* (4-10-1) it is stated that a man who approaches his preceptor at the age of twelve emerges a *śnātaka*

at a later time than that of the prescribed period. Sometimes the pupil remains with the *guru* all through his life.

Teachers have a large number of students in their institution and they as if vie with one another to attract the students whom they consider to be the source of their glory and happiness (T U, 1-1)

In the *Taittirīya* (1-9) we are told that daily study (*śādhā*) and recitation (*pravāṇa*) are regarded as austerity (*tapas*) and Vedic study is compulsory and no day is observed as a holiday.

The students are required to render personal service to their teachers as a part of moral and spiritual discipline. They form an intellectual community where there is no barriers of birth or wealth and thus they live in harmony and peace. This is the prevalent custom following which the students are required to live, work and receive all round education in the house of their preceptor. *Manu*³ tells us that as a man digging earth with a spade reaches water under the hard crust so a student attending and serving his teacher enters the heart of the teacher through reverence and obtains the knowledge possessed by the latter. It has been stated in the *Mahabharata*⁴ that no progress in knowledge is possible without service in the house of the preceptor.

It was obligatory on the part of the student to approach his spiritual preceptor with the sacred fuel called *śamīdhi* for the sacrificial fire, in his hand to obtain knowledge⁵. And as a matter of fact (*śamītpāṇi*) taking of sacred fuel in hand is the symbol of studentship and this is the prescribed procedure of receiving education. Even the sages of repute when they approach a particular teacher to obtain some knowledge on a particular branch of learning have had to follow this procedure.

3 *Manu*, 2 218

4 *Mbh*, 5 36-52

5 M U, 1 2 12 & 13

In a mystic hymn in the *Atharvaveda*⁶ we find, the sun or the primeval principle under the guise of a *Brāhmaṇa* student brings sacred fuel and alms for his teacher. The offerings of sacrificial fuel to a teacher was a symbol by which he was to be recognised by him as his student and implies a desire on the part of the student to participate in his domestic sacrifice and to accept the duty to be performed connected with it. It was also the duty of the student to collect alms for his own support and also for the support of his teacher. Similar references are to be met with in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁷ as well.

The five sages in the *Chandogya* approach the erudite king Asvapati Kaukeya with fuel in their hands to get the knowledge of the *Ultimate Reality*⁸.

We can notice here that there is no necessity of performing any initiatory rites for the capable students by a teacher. They do not even require to stay at their teachers' residence for the prescribed period of time by practising austerity and rendering personal service to him. Śaṅkara's significant remark in this connection merits attention.

*Yata evaṃ māhasala mahasrotṛiṣya brahmanah santo mahasalatvadabhimānān hitvā samidbharahasta jatito hinan rajanān vidyārthino vinayenopa yogmah tatha nṛairvidyo paditsubhirbhavitavajam, tebhyaścaadāt, vidyamanupantyaibopannaḥ paṇam akṣitvaiva tān yatha योग्येभ्यो विद्यामादाः तथा अन्यैर्दण्डिद्यैर्दत्तव्यं इत्यक्षयकारिणः*⁹

These great householders and great Vedic scholars who are Brahmins have renounced the pride of these qualifications and with a bundle of sacred fuel in their hands have come with due humility seeking knowledge to me (the king Asvapati Kaukeya). He imparts to them the knowledge without performing their initiatory

6 A 1, 115

7 ŚB 2 10-4-5 9

8 C.U. 5 11 7

9 Śa-kara m C O 5 11 7

rites As the king imparts the knowledge to persons who are fit to receive it so should other person (teacher) also impart knowledge to fit pupils This is the significance of this narrative

In the *Bṛhadaranyaka*¹⁰ we find that Gautama who goes to the assembly of pravahana Janvali to learn the supreme knowledge has to follow the prescribed procedure of the student (*samitpanih*) but not the other requirements of a student

Further, in the same *Upaniṣad*¹¹, we find Gargya saying to king Ajatasatru 'Let me come to you as a pupil' In the *Kauṣītaki*(1-1) we find that Āruni takes fuel in his hand and becomes a student of Citra Gārgyaan

In the *Chandogya*¹² we find the story of Indra who himself is obliged to live with Prajāpati as a student for no less than 101 years in order to get perfect instruction by following the same procedure

In the *Praśnopaniṣad*¹³ we find that Sukeśā, Sityakāma Sauryāvanī, Kausalya Vaidarbhi and Kabandhi approached the honourable Pippalada with fuel in hand

Thus taking the sacrificial fuel a sacred token of reverence and obedience in hand a man presents himself as a pupil to a teacher whose instruction he desires The essential quality insisted on in the students is a thirst for knowledge and earnestness in the endeavour to find out the truth. Thus in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* we find that Naciketas goes to the God of Death for the highest *Vidyā* In order to test his earnestness Yama offers him all sorts of worldly pleasures as against his desired object Naciketas refuses to accept them and urges upon the God of Death to grant him the object of his desire

Moreover there are certain rules of discipline which are enjoined on the students The foremost discipline of the student

10 B Ū , 6 2 7

11 *Ibid* , 2 1 14

12 C Ū , 8 7 3

13 *Praśna* 1 1

is to lead the life of *brahmacaryya* which is regarded as an absolute vow to be observed as *nitya* duty by the student seeking after truth. Discipline is regarded to be of greater importance than instruction. The ancient educators consider it to be their duty to help the student to get into an orderly routine of life.

In the *Mundāka*¹⁴ it is told that learning is to be imparted only to those who have undergone a discipline called *śirovrata* (*śirasi agnidhāraṇa lakṣaṇam*).

In the *Upaniṣads*¹⁵ it has been declared that students aspiring for spiritual knowledge are required to train themselves in the method of self-control, and acquire purity of mind during the period of stay in the preceptor's residence otherwise the highest knowledge cannot be achieved by them. In the *Praśnopaniṣad* (1-2) we find that the teacher asks the students to spend a year in contemplation, continence and earnest inquiry. In some cases the period of preparation is prolonged to test the student's earnestness and fitness to receive the desired knowledge. In the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*¹⁶ we find that the students should be of good conduct, tranquil, composed and peaceful in mind. Then again in the *Mundāka*¹⁷ we find further that the student should possess fortitude, eagerness, and the right notion of austerity. It may be said that the student is required to follow the code of discipline meant for him. In fact the discipline aims at concentration of intellectual effort and stability of character and the *Upaniṣadic* teacher lays great stress on the practice of continence on the part of the student to achieve this end.

Thus it can be seen that the first criterion of admitting one as a student is, as we have noticed earlier, that he should bring sacred fuel in his hand while approaching his teacher to receive education from him. This method of approaching the teacher with fuel in hand is recognised to be the symbol of studentship. It is indicative of his willingness to

14. M.U., 3-2-10.

15. S.U., 6-22; *Kaṭha*, 1-2-24, *Maitrī*, 6-29.

16. *Kaṭha*, 1-2-24.

17. M.U., 1-2-13.

reside and serve in the house of his teacher and to help in maintaining the perpetual continuity of his domestic fire. In several places of the *Chândogya*¹⁸ we find reference to this procedural method of imparting education. In the *Mundaka*¹⁹ also reference has been made to the same procedure.

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*²⁰ also there are references to approaching a teacher with fuel in hand and asking his permission to become his pupil. The *Upanayana* ceremony is necessary for becoming a student. From a passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*²¹ it is clear that this ceremony is not necessary for those who have already undergone this ceremony. Gautama becomes the student by simply uttering — I approach you as a student of Pravahaṇa Jaivali.

At the beginning of the fourth chapter of the *Chândogya* we have the story of how Raikva accepts Janaśruti as a student for imparting to him *Brahma-vidyā*²².

Janaśruti, was a good king practising all the kingly virtues to perfection. But he had no knowledge of *Brahman*. Goodness or piety without wisdom for excellence cannot lead a man to the ultimate goal of life. Being pleased with his goodness some supernatural beings manage to instil into him a zeal for the highest knowledge and make him aware of the presence of a great sage Raikva by name. The king searches him out, offers handsome presents and begs for instruction. The sage turns down his request and calls him a 'Śudra'. The king enhances his gifts and the sage agreed to teach him and imparts the supreme knowledge.

The fact that Janaśruti is called a *Śudra* and that finally he receives the desired teaching has made the author of *Brahma*

18 C.U. 5.11.7, 8.7.2, 8.10.3, 8.11.2.

19 M.U. 1.2.12.

20 Śa Brā. 11.5.4.

21 B.U. 6.2.7.

22 C.U. 4.1.1.

sūtra to raise the question whether *Śūdras* outside the pale of *vedic* learning, are entitled to receive the knowledge of *Brahman*.

"The answer is given that the *Śūdra* who is not competent for the *Upanayana* ceremony cannot study the *Vedas* and is therefore, disqualified for attaining *Brahma*-knowledge through the medium of *Vedic* study. The word '*Śūdra*' does not refer to caste. It may refer to the grief of *Jānaśruti* and not to *Jānaśruti* himself whether *Jānaśruti* came to grief or whether he rushed to *Raikva* on account of grief, the word '*Śūdra*' refers to one of these three things and not to caste. Therefore, the term '*Śūdra*' has not been used here in its conventional sense but in the etymological sense of one who 'suffers' and in the present case, the grief is due to the seeker's want of knowledge of *Brahman*."²³

Rāmānuja says that unless a disciple serves the teacher for a sufficient duration or offers him gift commensurate with his labour, the instruction will not bear the desired fruit.

Again, the section four of the chapter four of the *Chāndogya*²⁴ we find the story of *Satyakāma Jābāla* where the teacher *Gautama Hāridrumata* accepts *Satyakāma* as a worthy disciple on the ground that he must be *Brahmin*, because he has spoken the truth. From this story it can be inferred that truth has been made necessary and sufficient demonstration of one's *Brāhmin*-hood thereby enabling him to receive education in the prescribed form under his teacher. This is purely an ethical test of higher caste for its eligibility to receive the supreme knowledge.

In the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*²⁵ we find that *Naciketas* is accepted as a disciple purely on moral grounds (*vidyābhipiṣṭam Naciketasam* 2-4). *Naciketas* remains in the house of *Yama* for three

23. *The Brahma Sūtra*, S. Radhakrishnan (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950), p. 306. Vide Anandagiri's commentary on *Brahma Sūtra*, I 3-34.

24. C. U., 4-4-5.

25. *Kaṭha*, 1-1-9.

days without food and water owing to the latter's absence from his residence. As soon as Yama returns, he tries to make good his non-hospitality, and desires his guest to choose three boons in compensation for his fasting for three nights.

It can be inferred that a formal pupilage is not absolutely binding in the *Upaniṣadic* age. In the *Chāndogya*²⁶ King Aśvapati instructs the six *Brāhmanas* without performing or demanding any preparatory rites. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*²⁷ we find that Yājñavalkya imparts instruction to his wife Maitreyī who is not a student in the strict sense of the term and same is the case with Gargī. Further, it may be mentioned that Janaka to whom Yājñavalkya gives the highest knowledge is not a student in the regular way.

The general rule followed by all the teachers is that nothing should be taught to a person who is not the properly suited for it. Education is to be imparted only to those who are considered to be the *adhyākāra*, i.e., the students fit for the instruction in a particular branch of learning.

The proper recipient of knowledge

In some of the older *Upaniṣads* it is stated that knowledge should not be communicated to any one except to a son or a pupil adopted by the rite of *Upanayana*. The *Āitareya Āraṇyaka*²⁸ says that the mystical meaning of the combination of letters should not be communicated to any one who is not a pupil, who has not been a pupil for a whole year and who does not propose himself to be a teacher. In the *Chāndogya*²⁹ it has been stated that a father may declare this doctrine to his son, or to any other worthy disciple and not to any one else, even if one should offer him this sea-girt earth filled with

26 C U. 5.11.7

27 B U. 4.5.5, 3.8.1 to 12.4.4.23

28 *Āitareya Āraṇyaka* 3.2.6.9

29 C U. 3.11.5 & 6

wealth. This (doctrine) is certainly greater than fabulous wealth. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*³⁰ also it is declared by Satyakāma, son of Jabālā, that this doctrine must be communicated to none but a son or a disciple. A similar directive is also seen in the *Śvetāśvatara*³¹ which says, "This profound mystery should not be given to one whose passions have not been subdued, nor to one who is not a son or a disciple." A similar restriction is imposed by the *Maitrāyaṇīya*³², "This profoundest mystery one should not mention to anyone who is not a son, or who is not tranquil." From this it can be reasonably inferred that to satisfy the essential qualification of being a student one must be a son, or disciple with his senses controlled. *Vidyā*³³ (knowledge) is moreover represented as telling the *Brāhmaṇa* to impart her only to one who is qualified so that she may be powerful. So says the *Śruti*

*yameva vidyā śucimapramattaṁ
medhāvinaṁ brahmacaryopapannam
yaste na druhyet katamañcanā ha
tasmai mām bruja hidhipāya brahman*

Vidyā (the goddess of learning) says, "whom thou knowest to be pure, of subdued senses, intelligent and chaste and who does not offend thee, declare me to that careful *Brāhmaṇa*, who is a protector of treasure."

30. B. U., 6-3 12.

Śaṅkara remarks on it that the two, the son and the pupil are declared to be eligible to receive sacred knowledge. They are chosen out of the six qualified learners (*Vidyādharmaṣṭatīrthāni*).

The six qualified learners are—a pupil (*śiṣya*), a knower of the *Vedas* (*śrotṛiya*), an intelligent person (*medhāvī*), one who pays (*dhanadāyī*), a dear son (*priyok putrah*), and one who exchanges another branch of learning (*vidyayā vidyām prāha iti tat tīrthāni*).

31. S. U., 6 22.

32. *Maitrī*, 6-29

33. *Manu*, 2 114, vide *Muktikopaniṣad*, 1 51

Sacred lore³⁴ approached a *Brāhmana* and said to him, 'Preserve me, I am thy treasure, reveal me not unto a scorner, nor to a wicked man, not to one of uncontrolled passions, so preserved I shall become strong. Reveal me as the keeper of thy treasure, to the pure, intelligent, attentive and chaste, who will not offend thee or revile thee'

Chāndogya Brāhmana says that one should rather die with his learning, yet he should not impart it to an unworthy person—'*Viśvayā sārddham mṛyeta na vidyāmusare vapet* (Vide also *Mānu*, 2-113)

Further the *Śruti* says that knowledge should be imparted to the following six types of recipients

*brahmacārī, dhanadāyī, medhāvī, śrotṛyah, priyah
vidyayā vā vidyām prāha tāni śrithanī śanmama*

In the *Upaniṣads* it has been stated again and again that knowledge is to be imparted only to deserving aspirant, *adhikarī* who is endowed with *Śānti* (mind control), *danti* (sense control), *uparati* (detachment), *tītikṣu* (enduring of opposite without extraneous aids) and *śraddhā* (faith). In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (4-4 23) it is said

"*tasmādevaṃ vicchānto danta uparatas tītikṣuḥ samahito
bhūtvātmanyeātmanam paśyati sarvamatmanam paśyati*"
Let one see one's *ātman* in one's own self by being a *śanta*, *dānta*, *uparata*, *tītikṣu*, *samahita* and *śraddhāvan*

Faith is indispensable to every seeker of truth. In the *Kaṭhapaniṣad*³⁵ we find that at the beginning of his (of Naciketas) immortal adventure his mind is captivated by faith and by the strength of his faith in the truth of his search, he is able to

34 *Chāndogya Brāhmana*

*Viśvayā ha vai brāhmanamājogāma
tavahamasmi tvam mām palaya
anarhate' mānina maiva mā dā
gopāya mām śreyasī te hamasmi*

35 *Kaṭha*, 1 1 2

say to his teacher (Yama) that he has the competence to receive the wisdom from him, "Teach me, I have faith."³⁶ In the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*³⁷ in its description of the *Vijñānamāya Puruṣa*, faith as described as the very head of the knowledge. The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* says

Śraddhāmāyo'yam puruṣah, etc,

(17-3)

From the story of Satyakāma and Āruni it can easily be inferred how they satisfy the test of *Śraddhā* and *tapas* and receive instruction from their preceptors in all branches of knowledge and ultimately attain the highest spiritual end.

Then again in the *Brhadāranyaka*³⁸ we are told that "*īmetāṃ vedānubācanena brāhmaṇa vividiṣanti yajñena, dānena, tapasānasakena*".

The *Brāhmaṇas* seek to know Him (the *Brahman*) by the study of the *Vedas*, by sacrifice, by gifts, by penance, by fasting. In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*³⁹ it is stated

*"praśāntacittāya jitendriyāya ca
prahīnadosāya yathoktakārīṇe
guṇāyāyānugāya sarvada
pradeyametat satatam mumuksuṣaḥ"*

(Śl 324)

Daily Life of the Student

The student is to live upon whatever he can get by begging. He is to place all he gets before his preceptor and to eat only what the latter gives. The begging of food is regarded as a religious duty on the part of the students. About the procedure of begging food by the students Dr. Altekar⁴⁰ observes, "The rule

36 *Ibid*, 1113.

37 T. U., 241.

38 B U., 4422.

39 *Upadeśasāhasrī* 324

40 Dr. A. S. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, 3rd rev. & en. (Banaras: Nanda Kishore & Bros., 1948), p. 66

of begging was laid down for the student in order to teach him humility and make him realise that it was due to the sympathy and help of society that he was learning the heritage of the race, and being enabled to follow a profession that would secure him a living. This rule further removed the distinction between the rich and the poor and brought education within the reach of the poorest. It was also useful in reminding society of its duty and responsibility about the education of the rising generation. Civilization will not progress if each generation does not take proper steps to transmit its heritage to the next." Even life of dire poverty is in the long run rewarded with the acquisition of almost encyclopaedic knowledge.

When education of the student is completed, they are expected to make a handsome present to his preceptor commensurate with his labour. In this way the preceptor receives a considerable sum of money who in his turn utilizes them for the maintenance of his residential institution. We can gather information about this from the conversation between Kautsa and Raghu in the fifth canto of *Raghuvamśa* by Kālidāsa.

Kautsa, the disciple of Varatantu who having finished his education approached Raghu to get money from him for offering remuneration to his preceptor. The king wanted to give more than what was asked by the suitor while the latter would not take more than what was actually to be given to his preceptor⁴¹.

The educators of the *Upaniṣadic* age have laid great stress on the moral values of truth and sincerity. The students are to be true in every respect and that is the only way of building up of character and acquiring true knowledge.

'The teacher', observes Sastri, 'who was always a seer admitted the disciple for initiation on being convinced of his fitness for receiving the *Vidyā*. He trained him for the life, put into him the necessary seed of realisation, allowed it to grow and

bear fruit in the right season. Thus these *Brahma-Vidyās* were communicated in silence through the influence and example of the *guru*, rather than through precept which occupied a brief and formal place in the scheme of the spiritual culture of these ancients.⁴²

Two Types Of Students

The ordinary practice was that each student on completion of the period of studentship would leave the institution and return to his own rank and status in life. This type of student is popularly known as *upakurvaṇa brahmacārī*. There are also students residing life long in the preceptor's abode termed *naiṣṭhika brahmacārins* in ancient India. They never leave their teacher's residence and dutifully attend to the preceptors till the dissolution of their bodies.

The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*⁴³ records that Bharadvāja lived three lives in the state of a religious student. Indra approached him when he was old and said to him, "Bharadvāja, if I give you a fourth life, how will you spend it?" "I will lead the life of a religious student", he replied.

As a matter of fact the advanced students will set themselves up as new teachers and gather pupil around them and thus the ancient lore of India has been transmitted from generation to generation in this traditional manner. These *naiṣṭhika brahmacārins* or religious students can be termed the spiritual progeny of the preceptor who carry on the teacher's *vidyā varṇśa* or literary line, what, in the language of our ancient seers, is described as *guruṣṭya śācampaṛā*. In the *Mṛgśaka*⁴⁴ we find a chronological list of such a literary line. The line of tradition of the knowledge begins with Brahmā himself who is the founder of the *Brahma vidyā*. Brahmā taught it to Atharvana. Atharvana passed over to Angiras. He transmitted it to Bhāradvāja

42. Kapilī Sastri-Lights on the Upaniṣads, pp. 3-4.

43. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 3.10.11-3.

44. M. U. 1.2.

Satyavāha and Bhāradvāja to Aṅgiras and Aṅgiras taught it to Śaunaka the great house holder In the sixth section of the chapter four of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*⁴⁵ we find another list of a literary line

Vidyā vamsa

Teachers	Students
1 Gaupavana	1 Pautimaṣya
2 Pautimaṣya	2 Gaupavana
3 Gaupavana	3 Pautimāṣya
4 Kauśika	4 Gaupavana
5 Kaundīya	5 Kauśika
6 Śaṇḍīya	6 Kaundīya
7 Kauśika and Gautama	7 Śaṇḍīya
8 Āgņivesva	8 Gautama
9 Gārgya	9 Āgņivesya
10 Gārgya	10 Gārgya
11 Gautama	11 Gārgya
12 Satava	12 Gautama
13 Pārasaryayana	13 Satava
14 Gārgyānā	14 Pārasaryayana
15 Uddālakayana	15 Gārgyayana
16 Jābalayana	16 Uddalakāyana
17 Madhyamdīnyana	17 Jābalayana
18 Saukarayana	18 Madhyamadīnyana
19 Kāśyāna	19 Saukarayana
20 Sayakayana	20 Kāśyāyana
21 Kauśikāyana	21 Sayakayana

22. Ghṛtakauśika	22. Kauśikāvanī
23. Pārāśaryāyana	23. Ghṛtakauśikā
24. Pārāśarya	24. Pārāśaryāyana
25. Jātū Karnya	25. Pārāśarya
26. Āsurāyana and Yāska	26. Jātūkarnya
27. Traivani	27. Āsurāyana
28. Aupajandhani	28. Traivani
29. Āsuri	29. Aupajandhani
30. Bhāradvāja	30. Āsuri
31. Ātreya	31. Bhāradvāja
32. Mānti	32. Ātreya
33. Gautama	33. Mānti
34. Gautama	34. Gautama
35. Vātsya	35. Gautama
36. Śāṇḍilya	36. Vātsya
37. Kaiśorya kāpya	37. Śāṇḍilya
38. Kumārahārta	38. Kaiśorya kāpya
39. Gālava	39. Kumārahārta
40. Vīdarbhīkaundinya	40. Gālava
41. Vatsanapāt Bābhra	41. Vīdarbhīkaundiya
42. Pathin Saubhara	42. Vatsanapāt Bābhra
43. Ayāsyā Āngirasa	43. Pathin Saubhara
44. Ābhūti Tvāstra	44. Ayāsyā Āngirasa
45. Viśvarūpa Tvāṣṭra	45. Ābhūti Tvāstra
46. Two Aśvins	46. Viśvarūpa Tvāṣṭra
47. Dadhyañc Ātharvana	47. Two Aśvins
48. Atharvan Daiva	48. Dadhyanc Ātharvana
49. Mṛtyu Prādhvamsana	49. Atharvan Daiva
50. Prādhvamsana	50. Mṛtyu Prādhvamsana
51. Eka Rṣi	51. Prādhvamsana
52. Vipracitti	52. Eka Rṣi

53	Vyaṣṭi	53	Vipracitti
54	Sanaru	54	Vyaṣṭi
55	Sanātana	55	Sanaru
56	Sanaga	56	Sanātana
57	Parameṣṭhin	57	Sanaga
58	Brahman	58	Parameṣṭhin

The *Bṛhadaranyaka*¹⁶ records another line of tradition (*vidya vamsa*) as—the son of Pautimaṣī (received this teaching)—from the son of Katyayani, he from the son of Gautami, the son of Gautami from the son of Bharadvaji, he from the son of Parasari, the son of Parasari from the son of Aupasvasti he from the son of (another) Paraśari, he from the son of Katyayani, the son of Katyayani from the son of Kauṣikī, the son of Kauṣikī from the son of Ālambī and the son of Vaiyaghrapadī, the son of Vaiyaghrapadī from the son of Kanvi and son of Kapi, the son of Kapi from the son of Ātreya the son of Ātreya from the son of Gautamī he from the son of Bharadvajī, he from the son of Paraśari he from the son of Vasti, he from the son of (another) Parasari, the son of Paraśari from the son of Varkaruni he from the son of (another) Varkaruni, he from the son of Ārtabhagi, he from the son of śauṅgī he from the son of Sāṅkṛtī, he from the son of Ālambayani, he from the son of Ālambī, he from the son of Jayanti he from the son of Manḍukāyani he from the son of Manḍukī he from the son of śaṇḍilī he from the son of Rāthitārī he from the son of Bhāluki, he from the two sons of Krauñciki, they from the son of Vaidarbḥṭi, he from the son of karsakeyī, he from the son of Pracīrayogī, he from the son of Śarjivī he from Āsurivāsin, the son of prāśnī, the son of prāśnī from Āsurayāṇa, he from Āsuri Āsuri from Yajñavalkya Yajñavalkya from Uddalaka, he from Aruna Aruna from Upaveśī, he from Kuśī he from Vajaśnvas, he from Jihvavat, the son of Badhyoga, he from

Asita, the son of Varṣagna, he from Herita Kasyapa, he from Silpa Kaśyapa, this one from Kaśyapa, the son of Nidhrūva, he from Vac, Vāc from Ambhīṇi, Ambhīṇi from the Āditya (the Sun)

Another line of teacher which is same up to the son of Sañjivī, the son of Sañjivī (received it) from Mandūkāyari, he from Maṇḍavya, he from kautsa, he from Mahitthi, he from Vamakakṣayana, he from Śandilya, he from Vatsya he from Kusri, he from Yajnavacas the son of Rajastamba, he from Tura, the son of Kavasa, he from prajapati (Hiranyagarbha), Prajapati from Brahman (*the Vedas*) (B U , 6-5-4)

Further almost a similar line of teachers as that of the *Bṛadāraṇyaka* (4 6-1 to 3) has been mentioned in 2 6-1 to 3 of the same *Upaniṣad* vide also B U 6.3 7

Relation of the Students and the Teachers

The relation between the disciple and his preceptor is marked with implicit obedience on the part of the former and with deep affection on that of his preceptor. No service however difficult or menial in nature is grudged by the pupil while no fee is charged by the teacher, who most willingly communicates to him all that he knows. The relation between teacher and the student is direct and not through any third party. The students who are called *antesrāsi* live in the house of the preceptor as members of his family and perform his house-hold work most ungrudgingly. These forest schools or *āśrama* institutions are run with the active support of the patrons of learning. There are several stories in the *Upaniṣads* about gifts by rulers like Janaka to sages who conduct the *āśrama* institutions. Although financial assistance flows from the royal treasury still the king does not exercise any authority over the management of these institutions. Thus the sages enjoy full autonomy in respect of education of the people of the country.

The students are generally attracted by the reputation and scholarship of the teacher. The teachers also entertain only those students whom they consider to be fit, sincere, modest, shorn of malice and well behaved. The relationship established

between the teacher and the student is very intimate, happy and cordial. It is mainly due to the intimate personal contact between the preceptor and the pupil.

The preceptor and the disciple are united together to pray that the light of the sacred knowledge may illumine them both, that together they may attain the glory of wisdom. In the invocation mantra of the *Taittirīya*¹ which has a profound discussion of the problems of education, we find that the teacher and the students are unified by the common aim of preserving and propagating, the sacred learning. The prayer is for the full cooperation of the teacher and the student in the advancement of power, prosperity, enjoyment of virtue, knowledge and glory. The energy of both the student and the teacher is directed to one goal and each should look after the other as a genuine co-partner. The preceptor and the disciple are two links in the chain of advancement of culture, and each supplements the task of the other. The teacher invites scholars from all directions to help him in his endeavour to propagate and maintain the perennial flow of cultural link. It is prayed, "May scholars come to me, may scholars come to me swiftly, may they come to me from all directions. As water goes to the lower level, as the months enter into the year so may scholars come to me, O Lord"². Teachers made as it were the competition with each other to attract the student population whom they considered to be source of their glory and fame. The prayer for more and more students shows the desire to gather bands of students to teach and to form an academic atmosphere.

This pious wish of the teacher becomes fruitful because there prevails an atmosphere of mutual reverence, confidence and communion between the teacher and the taught. Thus we

1. T. U. 12. "*Saha nāvavatu saha mau bhunaktu saha vīryam karavāmahā tejasvī nāvadhītāmastu mā vidījāvahāi.*"

2. *Ibid*, 14. "*Ā mā yantu brahmacāriṇaḥ vi māyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ pra māyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ yathopah pravatānti Yata nāsā aharjaram evam māmi brahmacāriṇaḥ dhātārāyantu sarvataḥ.*"

hear frequent prayers for harmony between teacher and pupil and a note of warning against the evil consequences of the feeling and jealousy

The purpose of the gathering of students and the teacher together is for the accomplishment of what may bring name and fame to them both. Their performance may make them more exalted than the rich³. Let our joint enterprise afford us to be socially useful and economically sound to build up a happy state of ours. The material prosperity is not to be missed in the search for spiritual light. Material prosperity and spiritual devotion should go side by side. One is impossible without the other. In the *Ita Upaniṣad* it has been clearly disclosed that spiritual development and material prosperity should be well balanced and harmonised failing which there would always be danger of one being overpowered by the other.

In the invocation verse of the *Prāśnopaniṣad* we are told that the relationship may grow between the teacher and the pupil which is not only for their mutual benefit but for the larger interest of the society. It is the purpose of meeting scholars with scholars to bring about an allround development of the society—both cultural and economical. *bhadrāṁ karmebhīḥ śreyasā devā bhadrāṁ paśyemakṣabhir jayatrāḥ*⁴. May we hear with our ears what is auspicious. We can expect to hear good things with our ears only when the members of the society are educated, cultured and disciplined. In a culturally backward society it is unimaginable. In order to make the members of the society cultured let us strive to eradicate illiteracy from the society. Let us take our education within the reach of all so that we may not have to hear any slang words in the society.

*bhadrāṁ paśyemakṣabhir jayatrāḥ*⁴

May we see with our eyes what is auspicious. Unless we can remove all sorts of antisocial activities from our society

3 T U 14 *Yaso jameasānti śreyas vasyaso sant āvahanī vītān
vānā kīrvā dāśramātmānāḥ vā āmāḥ mama gāvāśca annapāne ca
sarvoddā*

through the emanation of education we cannot expect to have beautiful sight in the society. In order to create a healthy social environment the light of education is to be spread far and near, everywhere :

‘*Sthirair angaistuṣṭuvāmsastanūbhiḥ*

May we, strong in limbs and body, sing the praise of the highest and enjoy the years allotted to us. Let us acquire a good physique for the protection of the society and also to enjoy the benefit of good life throughout its full span. Let us praise those actions which are essentially beneficial to the society and do not prove to be detrimental to its progress. The teacher of the *Upaniṣad*¹ declared, “Let this body which is dead be burnt to ashes. Remember only the deeds.”

If a student wants to learn a different branch of learning he is free to leave his old teacher and go to one who is expert in that branch. Students are at liberty to quench their thirst for knowledge under several celebrated teachers. In the *Upaniṣads* reference as to the migration of students are not infrequently met with. The educational atmosphere lends support to the view that migration is a correct process of acquiring true knowledge. Some students wandered about from one place to another and acted as teacher (*Caraka*).

The spread of knowledge without academic mobility is impossible. This method only can make man free from close-mindedness and narrow outlook.

The cordial relationship that is established during the period of instruction between the teacher and the student is continued in their after life as well. The student is to call on his teacher frequently and the teacher is also used to return these visits, and this practice is not without mutual benefit. The teacher can ascertain how far the ex-students are serving the society and continuing his reading and study even after the formal

completion of their education Academic mobility can flourish only in such an intellectually developed society The relation is as if for

'saha nau Yajah saha nau brahmanarcasam' (TU, 131)

May we both, teacher and disciple, have glory and refulgence born of holy life and study At the end of the *Chândogya*⁵ we find a parting advice to the pupil

'He who has learned the *Veda* from the family of a teacher according to rule in the time left over from doing work for the teacher, he who after having come back again, settles down in a house of his own, continues the study of what he has learnt and has virtuous sons, he who concentrates all his senses in the self, who practises non hatred to all creatures except at holy places he who behaves thus throughout life reaches the world of *Brahman* and does not return hither again, Yea, he does not return here again "

Syllabus of Study ; Curriculum

In ancient India a remarkably extensive programme of teaching and of discussion is taken up by the preceptors in their residential institutions to make the students fit for the different activities to be performed in life. The teaching is done through intimate personal contact between the teacher and his students. There is no system of any formal examination and no degree or diploma is awarded to those who have completed their education. It is so because of the simple reason that the teachers, by intimate contact between mind and mind and also by their everyday activities in the school, are in the know of everything about the students and hence are able to recognise the fit and eliminate the unfit. In this system of education the teachers of the *Vedic* age pay attention not only to the preparation of the allround development of their students but also to their future role in family and society, thereby giving due consideration to both the theoretical and practical aspects of education. Moreover, in addition to the happy synthesis of these two fundamental things they add one more aspect to their programme which is a unique one in the field of education, viz., the programme of religious instruction. They genuinely feel the educational and man-making value of religions i.e., the need of infusing the spirit of religious ideas and religious behaviour in the mind of their

students thus enabling them to solve the inscrutable mysteries of life and death. Thus the purpose of educational programme is three fold

- (i) the acquisition of knowledge,
- (ii) formation of character and personality, and
- (iii) the inculcation of the spirit of social obligation and religious duties

The *Upaniṣadic* seers mainly make the division of knowledge into two, viz., *parā* and *aparā*. The *Munḍaka Upaniṣad*¹ declares that there are two kinds of knowledge to be acquired of which one is *para* and the other is *aparā*—the higher and lower knowledge. Regarding the scope of these two types of knowledge it further declares that the lower knowledge (*aparā vidyā*) consists of the study of *Rg veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sama veda*, *Atharva veda*, phonetics, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, metrics and astronomy². It is interesting to note here that even the study of the four *Vedas* is included in the lower category of knowledge. By the *parā vidyā*, *Munḍaka* means that knowledge which leads to the realisation of the *Ultimate Reality*, '*atha parā vidyā tadakṣaram adhiḡamya*' (1-1 5) that alone is higher knowledge which relates to the imperishable (*akṣara*) and it is for this reason, that the *parā vidyā* has been extolled in the same *Upaniṣad* as '*sa brahma vidyām sarva vidyā pratisthām* (1-1 1) the foundation of all knowledge—arts and sciences, whereupon Śaṅkara says, *sarva vidyābhivyaktihetutvāt sarva vidyāśrayamityarthah yenaśrutam śrutam bhavati, amataṁ matamāśnātam vyñātam iti śruteḥ*³

1 M U (1 1 4) *tasmāt sa hovāsa dve vidyayor itī ha sma vid brahmavidyā vadanīti parā caitāparā ca*

2 Ibid (1 1 5) *tattvāparā rṣi veda yajur vedah sāma veda tārva vedah śikṣa kalpo vyākaranam nīruktam chando jyotiṣam iti*

3 Śaṅkara on M U, 1 1 1

It is described as that knowledge whereby what has not been heard of becomes heard of, what has not been thought of becomes thought of, what has not been understood becomes understood⁴. This *parā-vidyā* has been recognised as the science of sciences wherein lies latent the knowledge of everything—*kasminnu bhagavo vijñāte sarvamidaṁ vijñātam bhavati-iti*⁵. Through understanding of what does all this world become understood. The same truth or knowledge has been declared by Yājñavalkya to Maitreyī in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*⁶.

Thus the highest knowledge which has been categorised as *parā-vidyā* is distinguished from all other knowledge including the knowledge of the *Vedas* together with the six *Vedāṅgas* and all other existing knowledge which comes under the head of *aparā-vidyā*. The inadequacy of even the knowledge of *Vedas* and all other existing areas of knowledge for attaining the *Ultimate Reality*—the supreme goal of human life has been proclaimed in clear and unambiguous terms by several *Upaniṣads*. In the *Chāṇḍogya*⁷ we are told that Nārada, in spite of his encyclopaedic knowledge, both secular and sacred, is overtaken by sorrow and seeks enlightenment from Sanatkumāra who characterizes whatever is learnt by Nārada as mere name (*nāma eva*). Nārada himself also observes that notwithstanding his extensive study of multifarious branches of learning he has not been able to realise the *Ātman*, the *Supreme Spirit*; he has mastered merely the words of the scriptures and has not been able to dive deep and realise their esoteric import. In his own words after such a prolonged period of extensive study he is a mere *mantra-vit* and not *ātma-vit*. Hence it can be inferred that the knowledge of *aparā-vidyā*, as Nārada admits, cannot lead one to the realisation of the *Ultimate Reality*.

4. C.U., 6-1-3.

5. M.U., 1-1-3

6. B.U., 2-4-5. *ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānena-
dam vidītam.*

In the same *Upaniṣad* we also find Śvetaketu to whom his father Uddālaka Āruni a great teacher of the age imparted instruction in *Supreme Reality* going to the court of king Pravahana rather puffed up with pride that he has learnt everything, but a few questions of the king disillusion him, he then returns in anger to his father cum preceptor and reproaches him 'So then, without having really done so you have claimed to have instructed me fully' In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*⁸ where the same story is repeated we are further informed that Śvetaketu tells his father, 'It was imagination then when you previously declared that my instruction was complete In the *Kausītaki Upaniṣad* (11) we find it is another Kṣatriya sage Citra Gargāyani to whom Śvetaketu goes for instruction in a particular matter Further, in the sixth chapter of *Chāndogya*¹⁰ we find that Śvetaketu returns from his proceptor, concerted with his scholarship His father Uddālaka asks him Have you inquired about that *ādeśa* i.e., the instruction by which the unheard becomes heard, the unthought of becomes thought of and the uncomprehended becomes comprehended' Śvetaketu is puzzled and wants to know how the knowledge of one particular thing can include the knowledge of other objects

This principle is further supported by several other statements made in the *Upaniṣadic* lore. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹¹ says, 'Therefore let a *brāhmana* after he has done with learning wish to stand by real strength (knowledge of the Self which enables us to dispense with all other knowledge) Further, in the same *Upaniṣad*¹² it is stated that 'He should not seek after the mere exoteric knowledge of the sacred lore, for that

7 CÜ 71 1 to 3

8 Ibid 535

9 BU 623

10 CU 611 to 3

11 BU 351 *tasmiṇ brahmanah pāṇḍityam nirvidya bālyena tisthāser*

12 Ibid 4-4 21 *tameva dhīro vijāḍya prajñām kurvīta brāhmanah nānudyād brhūn śabdūn vāco vīglāpnam hi tat*

is mere weariness of the tongue." The *Kaṣhopaniṣad*¹³ states that "This soul (*Ātman*) is not to be attained by instruction, nor by intellect, nor by much learning." The *Taittirīya*¹⁴ says, "Before whom (Supreme Essence) words and thought recoil, failing to reach It." The *Kaṣhopaniṣad*¹⁵ regards *aparā-vidyā* as *avidyā*; "widely contrasted and different are these two", says the *Kaṣha* 'nescience (*avidyā*) and what is known as knowledge (*vidyā*), although the *aparā-vidyā* includes, according to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* as we have already seen, the four *Vedas* together with the six *Vedāṅgas*. The *Śvetāśvatara*¹⁶ refers to "knowledge and ignorance that lie deeply hidden in the imperishable, infinite, *Supreme Brahman*; ignorance is perishable and knowledge is immortal." Yājñavalkya, in the course of instructing sage Uṣasti Cākṛāyana says, "you cannot see the seer of seeing. You cannot hear the hearer of hearing. You cannot think the thinker of thinking. You cannot understand the understander of understanding. He is your soul, which is in all things."¹⁷

The conception of a *Supreme Being*, a *Universal Spirit*, the All-Soul permeating and pervading the universe through and through is the very keystone of the philosophical speculations of the *Upaniṣadic* seers. The *Upaniṣads* recognise and declare God as the Universal Spirit ; all other things that have emanated from Him are parts of Him and will resolve back to Him, the source of creation, at the time of dissolution ; no object of creation can have any existence—*independent of God*. This is the lesson which Satyakāma Jābāla received; this is the very lesson which Yājñavalkya imparted to his wife Maitreyī. In fact, this is the great lesson which has been taught throughout the *Upaniṣads* in a hundred similes, parables and beautiful

13. *Kaṣha*, 1-2 23.
14. T.U., 2 4.
15. *Kaṣha*, 1-2 4
16. S.U. 5-1.
17. B Ū., 3-4 2., 'na dṛṣterdraṣṭāram patiyerna śruteh śrotāram śṇuṣā,
na matermantāram manvīthā, na vijñātervijñātāram vijñānīyāh,
eṣa ta ātmā sarvāntarah'.

teerds and for this great message the *Upaniṣads* occupy unique and unrivalled place in the literature of the world. We shall now take up the discussion of different branches of learning that were cultivated in the *Upaniṣadic* age. In the *Chāndogya* (7.1.2) we find Narada saying to Sanatkumara that he knows the following branches of learning. We are detailing below the names of the different branches with the meanings as given by Śaṅkara.

- (a) The *Rg-veda*, the *Yajur-veda*, the *Sama-veda*, as the fourth, the *Atharvāna*, as the fifth the *Itihāsa-purāṇa*, 'itihāsa puranam pancamam vedanam vedam' i.e., the fifth of the *Vedas*, which are spoken as having the *Mahabharata* for their fifth the *Veda* of the *Vedas* i.e. grammar. The grammar has been called 'the *Veda* of the *Vedas*' because it is with the help of grammar that the *Rg-veda* and other *Vedas* are understood through the various division of *padas* and the rest.
- (1) *Pitra* (*śrāddhakalpam*) stands for the science of *śrāddha* rituals, i.e., the rules for sacrifice for the ancestors.
- (2) *Rasi* (*ganitam*) i.e., mathematics or the science of numbers which includes algebra (*bijaganitam*).
- (3) *Daiva* (*utpatajñanam*) the science of portents.
- (4) *Nidhi* (*Mahākālādī nidhiśāstram*) the science of treasures as propounded by Mahakala and others. Some are of opinion that *Nidhi* has been used here in the sense of time or chronology. Venkateswara¹⁸ remarks, "Nidhi cannot be said to have any reference to chronology as rendered by Hume in his 'Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads'." It means esoteric science or lore as in Yaska.

18 S. V. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture through the Ages*, Vol. I (London New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1928) p. 61.

(2-4) *nidhip*. It has the later sense of deposit in the *Arthasāstra* of Kautilya (nidhayaka in book 2, chapter 8 and Nidhanam in book 12, chapter 4)". It is mentioned in the *Chāndogya* (8-3-2) *īd yathāpī huranya nidhīm nihitam akṣetrajñā uparyupari sañcaranto na vindeyuh*. Just as those who do not know the field walk again and again over the hidden treasures of gold and do not find.

- (5) *Vakovākyaṃ* (*Tarkasāstram*) stands for logic, the science of reasoning.
- (6) *Ekāyana* (*Nītisāstram*), the science of ethics or polity. The sense of military disposition is indicated by Kautilya, book 10, Chap. 2.
- (7) *Deva-vidyā* (*Niruktam*), the science of etymology.
- (8) *Brahma-vidyā*, the Vedic science in the shape of śikṣā (phonetics) kalpa* (rituals), *Chandas* (prosody)
- (9) *Bhūta-vidyā* (*Bhūta tantram*), the science of demons or demonology. It may be the same as *Pisāca-Vidyā* mentioned in *Gopatha-Brahmana* (1-10).
- (10) *Kṣatra-vidyā* (*Dhanurveda*), the science of war i.e. archery.
- (11) *Nakṣatrawidyā* (*Jyotiṣam*), the science of stars or astronomy.
- (12) *Sarpa-vidyā* (*Gāruda*), the science of snakes as propounded by Garuḍa i.e., snake-charming and toxicology.

**Kalpa*—One of the *Vedaṅgas* appears to be the general rules of conduct and regulation in regard to the study and teaching of the *Vedas*, for in the *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6-2) it is said that in the early *Kalpas* the knowledge of the highest kind should not be imparted to one who [was not calm and tranquil in spirit, and who was not a son or resident disciple. The *Kalpa* in course of time comes to be known as the manuals of ritualistic rites.

- (13) *Devajana vidyā* 'gandha yuktī-nṛtya gīta-vādyā śulpaḥ' i.e., the science of perfumery, dancing, singing instrumental music i.e., fine arts.

In the seventh section of the chapter seven of the same *Upaniṣad* we find almost a similar list of branches of learning enumerated with the addition of the following (as well as) heaven and earth, wind and space water and heat, gods and men, beasts and birds, grass and trees animals together with worms, flies and ants, right and wrong, true and false, good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, food and drink, this world and the yonder

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* we find almost a similar enumeration of the different branches of learning as—the *Rg veda* the *Yajur-veda* the *Sāma-veda* the *Atharvans* and *Āngirāsas*, (designated as the *Atharva-veda*), Legends (*Itihāsa*) ancient lore (*Purāna*) where Śaṅkara says, 'itihāsa iti urvāṣīpururavasoh samvādadiḥ urvāṣī hi apsarāḥ ityādi brahmanameva purānam 'asad va idam agra āsit, ityādi' i.e., by *itihāsa* such legends as the dialogue between the nymph Urvaśī and Pururavas is meant (*Śa Brā*, 9-4-4 1) (All the subsequent items are parts of the *Brāhmanas* only) and by *Purāna* such statements as 'This universe was at the beginning unmanifested, etc are meant

Vidyā—(*Devajana-vidyā*) which stands for the science of music, dancing, etc This also is *Veda*, etc (*Śa Brā* 13-4 3 10 14) *Upaniṣad* (Mystic doctrine) 'priyam ityetaḥ upāsita the doctrine about adoration for instance "the soul therefore let it be adored"¹⁹

Śloka (verse) *brahmanaprabhāḥ mantūḥ tadete ślokaḥ ityādayaḥ* the remarkable verse or the *Mantras*, occurring in *Brāhmanas* as 'there follows these *ślokas*'

Sūtra (aphorism) *vastu samgraha vakyaṇi vede yatha 'atmā ityeva upāsita' ityādinī*

The aphorism—sentences which give the pith of a thing, as “the soul, therefore, it should be adored.”

Anuvyākhyā (Glosses)—*mantra vīraṇam*, Glossess : explanation of the *mantras*

Vyākhyāna (commentaries) *Vyākhyānārthavādāḥ* commentaries in praise of diety, etc.

Prof. Weber is of opinion, observes Dutta, that these names do not necessarily imply distinct species of work which existed in the epic period and which have been since lost to us. There different subjects which we find interwoven in the *Brāhmanas* and *Upanisads* branched out into separate subjects of study, and were taught in the separate *sūtra* works and compositions which have come down to us. There is considerable force in the supposition, but at the same time it seems very likely that, on many of the subjects enumerated above, separate works existed in the epic period, which have been lost to us because they have been replaced by more elaborate and scientific works of a later age on the same subjects²⁰.

However in addition to these formal branches of learning taught in these forest schools there are also some other highly specialised branches of learning propounded by some of the eminent teachers of the age in their circle for the benefit of highly aspirant students for their specialisation. Thus in the *Chāndogya* we find that mention has been made of as many as fifteen different branches of learning (*Vidyās*), viz.,

- (1) *Udgītha-vidyā*
- (2) *Madhu-vidyā*
- (3) *Gāyatri-vidyā*
- (4) *Śāṇḍilya-vidyā*
- (5) *Kośadigvatsa-vidyā*
- (6) *Puruṣa-vidyā*

20 R C. Dutta *A History of Civilisation in Ancient India*, (Calcutta, Thacker, Spink & Co., 1891), pp 191-2.

- (7) *Samarga vidyā*
- (8) *Soḍaśakala vidyā*
- (9) *Upakosala vidyā*
- (10) *Prāna vidyā*
- (11) *Pañcagni vidyā*
- (12) *Vaiśvānara vidyā*
- (13) *Sad vidyā*
- (14) *Bhuma vidyā*
- (15) *Dahara-vidyā*

We shall now make an attempt to give a brief survey of the nature of these *vidyās*

(1) *The Udgītha-vidyā*

The knowledge or cult of *Udgītha* is called the *Udgītha vidyā* as the knowledge of the highest is called the *Brahma vidyā*. This *vidyā* has been mentioned in the first *prapaṭhaka* of the *Chāndogya* only and not in any other *Upaniṣad* nor in any other chapter of this *Upaniṣad* as well. The *Udgītha* has been extolled as the highest knowledge and is enjoined to be worshipped as such. The very opening verse enjoins on to initiate the worship of 'Om' as the *Udgītha* for 'Om' is the representation of the *Supreme self* and stands as the best basis for meditating upon that *self*. It is the essence of all spiritual endeavour for the realisation of God. *Udgītha* has been variously designated as the sun the *āditya* the *ākāśa* the life in the nose the organ of speech the eye and is to be worshipped as such. Further, *Udgītha* is spoken of as the essence of *Sama veda* which again is the essence of the *Rg veda*.

From this it would appear that *Udgītha* is the highest God equivalent to *Brahman* of the *Upaniṣads* but it soon became obsolete and is replaced by the terms *Ātman* and *Brahman*. In the *Chandogya*¹ there is a discussion on the subject

amongst the *Vedic* teachers viz., Śilaka Śālāvatya, Caikitāyana, Dālbhya and Pravāhana Jaivali.

(2) *The Madhu-vidyā* :

In the beginning of the third *Prapāṣhaka* of the *Chāndogya*, *Āditya* is spoken of as the highest God, 'asau vā ūdityo devama-dhu'. This sun verily is the honey of the deities.

The sun is regarded as the honey of the Gods preserved in the bee-hive with the heaven as the supporting beam from which sky hangs like a bee hive. The rays which the sun spreads out in the different directions—eastern, southern, western, northern and upwards—are the different honey cells. The hymns of the *Vedas* as well as the body of the occult utterances, constitute the bees which [work on the bee-hives in various directions collecting honey from all kinds of flowers such as those of the *Rg-veda*, the *Yajur-veda*, the *Sāma-veda*, the *Itihāsa-purāṇa* and finally the *Brahma-vidyā*. The five different colours of the sun are the several varieties of nectar on which live the various kinds of deities.

The sun neither rises nor sets i.e., when the realised soul enjoys day once and for all when for him the distinction between night and day vanishes finally i.e., the mystic devotee becomes the eternal unborn *Brahman*, not conditioned by time as marked by the rising and settings of the sun²². This doctrine of honey is imparted by *Brahma* to *Prajāpati*, *Prajāpati* tells this to *Manu* and *Manu* to his descendants.

The father expounds this doctrine of honey or the science of *Brahman* to his eldest son *Uddālaka-Āruni*. It is further stated that the fathers or teachers should teach this *Brahman* to their eldest sons or disciples who are worthy heirs to their knowledge.

22. CU. 3.11.3

na ha vā asmā udeti na vimlocati sakṛddīṣā hoiśasmā līlaveti
ya etimevām brahmaperijed-m veda.

Because, to bestow this knowledge is greater than to make a gift of the world filled with treasure²³

(3) The Gāyatrī-vidyā

The Gāyatrī is identified with Brahman : *gāyatrī iva idam sarvam bhūtaṃ yadidaṃ kīṃ ca, vāgāi gāyatrī, vāgā idam sarvam bhūtaṃ gāyatrī ca trāyate ca*²⁴.

Verily, the Gāyatrī is everything here that has come to be, verily the Gāyatrī is speech Verily, speech sings of (gāyati) and protects (trāyate), everything here that exists Gāyatrī is so called because it sings (gāyati) and protects (trāyate) Here Gāyatrī is contemplated as earth because everything is established here and does not go beyond it, and then as the body belonging to the person and then again the person residing in the heart of hearts is the same The Gāyatrī is a metre with four pādas each pāda having four syllables, while commenting on (C U, 3-12 S) Śamkara says

*satsā catuṣpadā saḍaḥṣṭapadā cchāndorūpā satī
bhavati gāyatrī saḍ vidhā vāg bhūta-pṛthivī-
sarīra hṛdaya prānarupā satī saḍ vidhā bhavati'*

The Gāyatrī is sixfold in the shape of speech, creature, earth body, heart and vital breath Gāyatrī is identified with Brahman and hence the meditation on Brahman as Gāyatrī is expounded under the coverage of Gāyatrī vidyā The Gāyatrī is to be meditated on as the symbol or Brahman The worlds of matter are but one of His parts or quarter and other three parts are consecrated in immortality.²⁵

23 Ibid, 3 11 5,6

*idam vai tatpṛeṣṭhāya putrāya pitā brahma prabrūṣṭi prapayyaya vāntevāsine nānyasmi kasmācāna, yadyapya smi
imāmadbhik parigrhitam dhanaṣya pārnam dadyādeta deva
tato bhūya ityeta deva tato bhūya iti*

24 C.U, 3 12 6.

25 C U, 3 12 6

*tārāṇ asya mahimā tato jyāyāṃśca pārūṣaḥ pāṇāḥ sva sarvā
bhūtāni, tripāṇāśvāmṣṭāni divi*

(4) *Śāṇḍilya-vidyā* (Doctrine of Śāṇḍilya)

The fourteenth section of the third chapter of the *Chāndogya* is traditionally recognised as *Śāṇḍilya-vidyā*, the teaching of the sage Śāṇḍilya. The central idea of this *vidyā* is 'sarvam khalvidam brahma, tajjalān iti. All this verily is Brahman, because all this originates from, ends in, and subsists on Brahman. Hence one should meditate on Brahman having acquired mastery over the senses that tend to lead one astray. Thibaut says regarding it, "This small *vidyā* is decidedly one of the first and most characteristic texts; it would be difficult to point out another passage setting forth with greater force and eloquence and in an equally short compass the central doctrine of the *Upaniṣads*."²⁶ Brahman is the abode of all good qualities, from Him has proceeded all that exists. In Him do they live, and to Him shall they return. He alone who possesses this faith and has no doubt about it will obtain the result : 'The famous *Śāṇḍilya-vidyā*', observes Radhakrishnan²⁷ 'which affirms the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Brahman.' For Śāṇḍilya

- (1) The Absolute is that from which things are born, to which they repair and by which they live,
- (2) our next life depends on what we do in this life,
- (3) *Ātman* is both transcendent and the immanent, and
- (4) the end of man is union with the Self.

(5) *Kośavijñāna-vidyā*

The fifteenth section of the third chapter of *Chāndogya* deals with this *vidyā*. The cultivation of this *vidyā* is to bring about the longevity of a son, which is necessary for the welfare of the

26. George Thibaut, 'Introduction', the *Vedānta Sūtra*, 2nd rp' (Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1963) p CX iv.

27. S. Radhakrishnan, "The Principal Upaniṣads, London (George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1953) p 392.

father in after life. A long lived son alone can acquire the knowledge of the *Vedas* and perform duties as prescribed for the benefit of himself and his fore-fathers.

It has been said in the *Chândogya* (3 13 6) that a heroic person is born in his family, but the mere birth of a heroic person is not enough for the liberation of his father. For this reason it is the well disciplined son whom they regard as conducive to the religion' so says the *Bṛhadaranyaka* (1 5 17) "*tasmāt putramanuṣṭam lokyamāhuḥ tasmādenam anuśāsi, sa jadanam vidasmallokāt praiti*"

Therefore it becomes necessary to find out how longevity could be attained in order to enable one to educate his son properly, and for this reason the *kośa vijñāna vidyā* has been introduced.

(6) The *Puruṣa vidyā*

This *vidyā* is mentioned in the sixteenth section of the chapter of the said *Upaniṣad*. This is a learning concerning the meditation upon the *Puruṣa* or the Universal Spirit encompassing the threefold world and the four quarters as his consorts and air as the child. *Puruṣa* is identified with *Yajña*. And then the *Āditya* is identified with *Brahman* and the meditation on the *Āditya* as *Brahman* is extolled. This *vidyā* is introduced for the longevity of the father himself because it is only while one is himself alive that he comes by such desirable things as the son and the like, not otherwise as pointed out by Śaṅkara.

'athedanīmātmano dīrghajīvanaya ideamupāsanam japa ica vidadhadeha jñan hi svayam putrēdīpālena yujate nānyathā iti'

This *vidyā* is expounded by the seer Mahāṛṣi Aitareya. The teacher says that any one who practises this with firm conviction, lives for a hundred and sixteen years as he himself enjoys such a span of life without the ailments of old age.

Ghora a descendant of the sage Āṅgiras imparts this knowledge to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī (C.U., 3-17 6), who becomes free of desire.

•(7) *Samivarga-vidyā*.

In *Chāndogya* (4-3-1) 'mention has been made of this *vidyā* which explains how *vāyu* (air) and *prāṇa* (breath) are to be meditated upon as *Brahman*. These two verily are the two absorbents, air among the gods, breath among the vital breaths. The meditation on them as *Brahman* is enjoined here. This teaching is imparted through a story, a method usually adopted by the *Upanisadic* teachers for making the teaching easily intelligible. This story is known as the story of Jānaśruti and Raikva. This shows how the attainment of the knowledge of the teaching is to be cultivated by such means as faith, giving of food, absence of pride and so forth.

•(8) *Soḍaśakala-Brahma-vidyā*

This is the knowledge of a quarter of *Brahman*, consisting of four sixteenths as possessing a support. Satyakāma Jābāla received this instruction from nature as well as from his revered preceptor Gautam Hāridrumata. Although Satyakāma is 'taught this *vidyā* by the deities (Bull, Agni, Swan and an Aquatic Bird), it has further been expounded by his teacher for Satyakāma declares that it is only knowledge learnt from the teacher that becomes best (*ācāryāddhaiva vidyā viditā sādhiṣṭham prāpati*- C.U., 4-9-3).

•(9) *Upakosala-vidyā* (*Ātma-vidyā*) (C.U., 4-10 to 14)

The knowledge which Upakosala received from the fires first and then from his preceptor Satyakāma regarding the self is known as *Upakosala-vidyā*. In fact the fires instruct Upakosala about the *Ātman* briefly and not about meditation, etc., for spiritual practice. The teacher imparts all the necessary instruction about it. Here the teacher has expounded the philosophy of *Brahman* by way of introducing the *Agnividya* or 'the science of the Fires'. The story has been introduced here in order to show that faith and austerity are necessary for the acquisition of the knowledge of *Brahman*. This *vidyā* reveals that *Brahman* is boundless joy transcending at once physical space and finite felicities.

(10) *Prāna vidyā* (The Doctrine of *Prāna*) (C U, 5-1-1 & 2)

By this *vidyā*, *Prāna* has been extolled as the eldest and the best 'prāna vāṇa jyeṣṭhaśca śreṣṭhaśca'. He who knows the eldest and the best, surely becomes the eldest and the best. *Prāna* is superior to others and the qualities constituting superiority are prescribed for meditation. Satyakama Jābāla has imparted this to Goṣruti. *Prāna* is regarded as *Ātman*. The teacher has explained how the *prāna* is superior to speech and the rest though they act collectively and how this *prāna* is to be meditated upon as *Ātman*. The teacher establishes the superiority of *prāna* by means of negation and affirmation, for life is found to persist even on the departure of others, but not on the departure of *prāna* and hence its superiority over others.

(11) *Pañcagni vidyā*

In *Chandogya* (5 4 1 to 10) we find that pravahana, a *Aṣṭatriya* king who is an eminent teacher of the age imparts instruction to Uddalaka Āruṇi, a *Brāhmana* sage, the doctrine of five fires—(*Pañcagni-vidyā*)—which runs as: The world is indeed the fire of which the sun is the fuel, the rays are the smoke, the day is the flame, the moon is the ember, the stars are the sparks. Into this fire the deities offer the oblation of faith. Fire is identified with *Parjanya*, the earth, man, woman. He who knows (worships) these five fires thus is not tainted by sins and obtains the meritorious world. In section two of the sixth chapter of the *Bṛhadaranyaka*²⁸ we find reference to the *Pañcagni vidyā*. In the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*²⁹ and *Śvetāśvatara*³⁰ *Upaniṣad* the fire worship is extolled. The teacher says that one who knows this doctrine of the five fires is not contaminated by sin even if he associates with the great sinners. He becomes pure and clean by virtue of the philosophy of the five fires and attains pure region of *Prajāpati* and other deities.

(12) *Vaiśāṇara vidyā* (Knowledge about the Universal Self)

In the eleventh section of the chapter five of the *Chāndogya* we are told that five sages, namely,

28. B U 6 2 9 to 13

29. Aṣṭ/ 1 3 1

30. S U 6 15

- (i) Prācīnaśāla Aupamanyava
- (ii) Satyayajña Pauluṣi
- (iii) Indra-dyumno Bhāllaveya.
- (iv) Jana-Śārkaṅkāṣya
- (v) Budila Āśvatarāśvi, who are themselves eminent Vedic scholars and great house-holders approach

Uddālaka Āruni and seek enlightenment concerning the Universal self—*Brahman*. Uddālaka though engaged in the study of the *Vaiśvānara-Self* realises that he does not possess the requisite knowledge to meet their inquiry and, therefore, he recommends them to another teacher and himself also joins the party. All the six approach king Aśvapati Kaikeya and ask him to enlighten them on the subject concerned. Aśvapati before imparting an instruction first of all tries to ascertain how far they already know about *It*, and then begins to impart to them wisdom on that basis comprehending and completing what they severally know.

Aśvapati finally gives a connected and comprehensive account of the *Supreme Reality* called here *Vaiśvānara*. This *Vaiśvānara Self* is to be realised as encompassing and comprehending the entire universe and is to be meditated upon as a totality and not as a fractional manifestation. The meditation on the *Vaiśvānara Self* as the *Ultimate Reality* goes under the name *Vaiśvānara-vidyā*. Finally the teacher gives the import of his teaching as one who realises *Vaiśvānara Self* forgets his own sufferings and becomes cheerful in the joys of others.

(13) *Sad-vidyā*

The sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya* is devoted to the instruction of Śvetaketu by his father Uddālaka concerning the Absolute self as '*Sad eva, saumya, idam agra āstī ekame-vādvītyam*'.

In the beginning, my dear, this world was just Absolute Existence or Being (*Sat*) one only, without a second and the knowledge of it is called *Sad-vidyā*. The said chapter of *Chāndogya* contains the teaching of the great spiritual teacher Uddālaka who imparted it to his son Śvetaketu, the disciple aspiring

for supreme knowledge, Śvetaketu is sent by his father, to his preceptor to learn all the different branches of learning. Śvetaketu after his stay at his preceptor's house for twelve years comes back to his father full of conceit. On questioning him his father comes to learn that his son does not actually know what is regarded as the Supreme object of knowledge. When Śvetaketu asks his father to enlighten him, the father tells him first as to what may be called the supreme object of knowledge through which what has not been heard of becomes heard of, what has not been thought of becomes thought of, what has not been understood becomes understood. Secondly, that supreme object of knowledge viz., the Supreme Spirit can be regarded as the final substratum of all things—'just as through one clod of earth everything made of earth may be known, just as through the knowledge of a lump of gold everything made of gold may be known in similar manner one can gather the knowledge of the substratum of all phenomenal objects'.³¹ Thirdly, when this supreme object of knowledge is realised when this eternal substance is found out that knowledge becomes real and every thing else is understood as a mere phenomenal manifestation of that *Ultimate Reality*. At the end of the discourse the father tells his son that the real thing the sole abiding reality is *Ātman*. That thou art. Here ends the final instruction. Thus the *Upaniṣadic* seer has expounded this *Vidyā* by introducing the story relating to the father and son for the purpose of indicating the great importance of the teaching dealt with.

(14) *Bhūmā vidyā*

This *vidyā* is expounded in the seventh chapter of the *Chāndogya* which is dedicated to the dialogue of Narada and Sanatkumāra.

31 CU, 613

yenāśrita n śrutam bhavati amatam
matam avijñātam vijñātam iti

CU, 614

yathā saumya ekena mṛt pinde
sarvaṁ mṛtmaṇi vijñātam syāt

CU, 615

yathā saumya ekena lohamaṇi
sarvaṁ lohamāṇi vijñātam syāt

Nārada, well versed in the four *Vedas* and all other branches of learning, approaches the renowned teacher Sanatkumāra and laments for his ignorance of *Ātman*, though he has gained mastery over *mantras*. He begs for enlightenment so that he may overcome the sorrows of life. Then Sanatkumāra begins to impart instruction: 'That which is verily the Infinite (*Bhūman*) that is happiness; there is no happiness in the small (*finite, alpa*,) i.e., worldly objects. The Infinite alone is happiness. The Infinite alone one should desire to investigate, *yo vai bhūma tat sukhaṁ, nālpe sukham asti, bhūmaiva sukham, bhūma tveva vijjñāsitavya iti* (C.U., 7-23-1).

On being asked by Nārada about the notion of *Bhūman* Sanatkumāra advances the following definition of *Bhūman*: '*yatra nānyat paśyati nānyacchṛṇoti nānyad vijānāti sa bhūma; atha yatrānyat paśyati anyacchṛṇoti anyad vijānāti tad alpa*' (C. U., 7-24-1). Where one does not see another, does not hear another, and does not know another, that one is the *Bhūman*. Where one does see another, does hear another, and know another, that is trivial. When one knows the 'Infinite', either by way of seeing, or hearing, or knowing there is nothing that falls outside the range of his vision ; in that case the knowing is all-comprehensive, all-embracing and all-pervading leaving no residue. The nature of the joy that flows from *Bhūman* is as Infinite as *Brahman* Himself is Infinite. The term *Bhūman* signifies *Brahman*. Hence one who is in communion with *Bhūman* by way of knowing, knows no sorrow for *Bhūman* is infinitely blissful. Thus Sanatkumāra shows Nārada the other shore of (the ocean of) darkness. Thus identifying the individual self with the limitless *Brahman* Sanatkumāra declares, 'I am one with Him'.

·(15) *Dahara-vidyā*

The eighth chapter of the *Chāndogya* contains that which is traditionally called *Dahara vidyā*. There are versions of it in *Taittirīya* (iv) and also in the *Brhadāranyaka* in the discourse of Yājñavalkya to Janaka. It may be noted in this connection that the

contents of the *Dahara-vidyā*, that of the *Śāṇḍilya vidyā*, the *sad-vidyā* and also of the lesson of *Antarjñi Brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhādāraṇyaka* are similar in nature. The conception of *Brahman*, though immanent i.e., dwelling in the centre of the individual is at the same time transcendent as per fundamental doctrine of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Dahara-vidyā* aims at establishing this truth. The '*Daharākāśa*' or the little space in heart is linked up with the great sky, the vast space outside. That little space is the city of *Brahman*³² where He is to be realised.

In the opening section of the chapter eight of the *Chāndogya* it is stated that within the body there is a space where dwells the self or soul, which is not destroyed even when the body is destroyed. The soul is without sin, without decay, without death, without grief, without hunger, etc. That self is '*atha ye eṣa samprasādo'smac-charīrāt samutthyāya param jyotirupa-sampadya svena rūpenābhiniṣpadyate eṣa ātmeti horāca etad amṛtamabhyāyam, etad brahmeti, tasya ha yā etasya brahmano nāma satyam iti*', (C U, 8-3-4)

"Now that self who rising of this body, reaches the highest light and appears in his own form 'He is the soul', said He. It is immortal, it is fearless, it is *Brahman*. The name of that *Brahman* is Truth"

The doctrine of the *Upaniṣads* centres round the special terms *Brahman* and *Ātman*, *Brahman* is the Universal spirit and *Ātman* is indwelling spirit of man. The *Upaniṣadic* seers with their emotion, devotion and spiritual vision arrive at the conclusion that *Ātman* is one with *Brahman*, and to them there is no difference in the supreme essence of man and world around. The seers utter in ecstasy, '*Sarvam khalvidam brahma*'³³. The teachers of the *Upaniṣads* impart this knowledge to their disciples in the schools of their hermitage. The spark of truth comes direct from the heart of the guru to enter into the heart of

32. C U 8 1 2

33. C U, 3 14 1

the disciple. This *vidyā* is known as *Ātma-vidyā* or *Brahma-vidyā*. In the *Upaniṣad* this *vidyā* is often referred to as *Rahasya-vidyā* or secret knowledge,—the knowledge which should be imparted in secret, in the solitude of forests to a few eager, earnest and deserving disciples. It has been said, 'Do not give this knowledge to any one but to your eldest son or to a worthy disciple, staying with you for long listening to your commands with obedience, respect and discipline, because giving this knowledge is more precious than giving away of this see-girt earth full of treasures³⁴. In the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* we find Naciketas approaching the God of Death for the highest *vidyā* i.e., of the *Ātma-vidyā*.

At the time of death, the individual soul leaving behind this body is merged in the All-soul. The distinction between body and soul is further explained by a story called the story of Prajāpati, Indra and Virocana in the last half of the *Chāndogya*. Where Prajāpati at last communicated to Indra the true knowledge as—*maghavan, martyaṁ vā idaṁ śarīramāttam mṛtyunā, tadasyāmṛtasvāśarīrasyātmanodhiṣṭhānamātto vai saśarīrah. priyā-priyābhīyām, na vai saśarīrasya sataḥ priyāpriyayorapahatirastyā-śarīram vāya santam na priyapriye spṛśataḥ*³⁵.

O Maghavan, verily, this body is mortal and subject to death, but it is the abode of this immortal bodiless soul. This body is subject to pleasure and pain; but the disembodied soul is not subject to pleasure and pain. Just as air, lighting, and thunder are bodiless but rise from the sky, so the soul which is bodiless rises from the body. Thus the position of Prajāpati's instruction to Indra in relation to the conception of *Brahman* as seated in the heart is clearly established.

Let us now pass over to other types of *vidyā* as mentioned in other *Upaniṣads*. It is our common knowledge that of all the *vidyās*, the *Ātma-vidyā* occupies the most prominent place in the

34. C.U., 3-11-5-6,
B.U., 6-3-12,
S.U., 6-22.

35. C.U., 8 12 1.

Upa iṣṭic literature We find another *vidyā* viz., *Prāna vidyā* which plays no less an important role in the whole range of the religious literature *Prāna vidyā* out of all the subsidiary *vidyās* of *Ātma vidyā* looms large in the field of speculation In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*³⁶ we are told that *Prāna* is identical with *Brahman* “*prāno brahmeti vyajānāt, prānūddhryeva khalīmanī bhūtānījaya nte, prānena jātāni jīhanti, prānam prayantīyabhisamīśanti*” ‘He understands that the *Prāna* (vital breath) is *Brahman* for, from the *Prāna* verily, are these beings born by the *Prana*, when born do they live into the *Prāna* (at the time of dissolution) do they enter This *Prana* means vital breath and does not signify Supreme Reality—*Brahman* The father-cum teacher gradually leads his son cum disciple Bhṛgu to the final conception of *Brahman* as *Ānanda* or Supreme Bliss stage by stage like conception of *Brahman* as *anna*, as *prāna* and so on We have discussed this point fully, under *Vārūṇī vidyā* in this chapter The *Prāna* is recognised as the vital breath of animate and inanimate world without which nothing can exist *Prana* is one of the first two things created by Prajapati as it is said in the *Prāṇopaniṣad*³⁷

sa mithunamutpādayate, rayīm ca pranam ca ādityo ha vai prāṇh rayīreva candramāh rayīrā etat sarvam janmūrtam cāmūrtam ca, tasmānmurtireva rayīh.

He (Prajapati) created the pair, the *rayī* (moon) and the *Prāna* (the sun) The sun is, verily, *Prana*, life, the moon is *rayī* food Food is indeed, all this—what has form and what is formless Therefore everything having form is, indeed, food We have already noticed that in the *Chandogya*³⁸ the *Prāna* has been extolled as the eldest and the best, “*prāno vāra jyeṣṭhaśca śreṣṭha śca*”

Again in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*³⁹ we are informed that *Prāna* has been identified with *Hiranyagarbha tadākuḥ, yadayameka*

36 TU, 331

37 *Prāna* 14 & 5

38 CU, 511 also in BU, 611

39 BU 399.

ivaiva pavate, atha kathamadhyardha iti, yad asminnidam sarvamadhyardhnat, tenādhyaardha iti, katama eko deva iti, prāna iti, sa brahma, tyadityācakṣate, 'which is the one God' ?
 'The vital force (*Hiraṇyagarbha*). It is *Brahman*.

In the same *Upaniṣad*⁴⁰, *Prāṇa* has been extolled again and again as

(i) *Prāṇo vai balam tat prāṇe pratiṣṭhitam.*

The vital force is verily strength ; hence truth rests on the vital force.

(ii) *Prāṇo vā amṛtam*

The vital force is the deathless principle

(iii) *Prāṇo vai satyam*

The vital force is verily the truth

(iv) *Prāṇa vāi yaśo-vīryam*

The vital force is indeed glory and power

The *Prāna* is real. The *Prāṇa* stands for the individual self as in the *Bhūmā-vidyā*. It is more real than the material world, in so far as it maintains its substantive individuality through all eternity. No material object enjoys such undecaying individuality. *Brahman* is more real than the individual spirit also. *Brahman* is the reality of all realities. In the third chapter of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* we find another type of *vidyā* known as *Vārūṇī vidyā*.

Bhṛgu approaches his father, Varuṇa, and asks him about the nature of *Ultimate Reality*. The father-cum-teacher gives a definition of *Ultimate Reality* as that from which all things spring, in which they abide and into which they resolve at the time of dissolution. He advises the pupil to discover the principle, through personal exploration by way of reflection and meditation. The boy after practising penance returns to his father and tells him that food may be regarded as the principle of things. The father not being satisfied asks the boy again to practise penance. Thus Bhṛgu's knowledge passes from the

40 B.U., 5 14-4 : 1-6-3 : 2-1 20 ; 1 2-6.

grossest phase to the subtlest, viz. through the categories of *anna* (matter) *prāṇa* (life), *manas* (mind) and *ijñāna* (consciousness) to *Ānanda* (bliss). After the announcement of each of the four earlier discoveries Varuna exhorts him to meditate and inquire further. When the son finally brings the answer that it may be the beatific consciousness which is the source of all things whatsoever, the story suddenly stops there and no further reference to the teacher is there and the teacher stops advising further exploration. We are in the dark whether the father is satisfied with the final answer. But however we are told that this piece of knowledge will be known as *Varuṇa-vidyā* and it should be honoured even amongst the Gods. This is the *vidyā* Bhṛgu learns and declares for the benefit of humanity.

In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* we find five-fold division of knowledge popularly known as the five great *samhitās* or combinations, as, *pañcasu adhikaraneṣu, adhiloḥam, adhiyotiṣam, adhi-vidyam, adhiprajam, adhyātmanam* (T U, 1-3 1)

Combination with regard to the world, the heavenly lights, knowledge, progeny, and the *ātman* (body). In other words, the five-fold division stands out as

- (i) *Loka-vidyā*
- (ii) *Jyotiṣ-vidyā*
- (iii) *Brahma-vidyā*
- (iv) *Suprajā-nirmāṇa-vidyā*
- (v) *Adhyātma-vidyā*

One who meditates on these five-fold knowledge becomes endowed with progeny, wealth in cattle, the lustre of Brahman, food, etc., and the happy abode of heaven, *Samdhīyate prajāḥ paśubhiḥ, brahma-varcasendāndyena suriargyena lokena* (T U 1 3-6). Let us briefly evaluate these *vidyās*.

(1) *Loka-vidyā*

The knowledge of the three worlds viz. the earth (*bhūh*), the ether (*bhuvaḥ*) and heaven (*svaḥ*) is meant. The human body is composed, out of the materials available in these three-

worlds. A man should have a knowledge of the five elements which go to the composition of his body, and as a matter of fact, the knowledge of these three worlds is essentially necessary to obtain the highest knowledge.

(2) *Jyotiṣa-vidyā*

This kind of knowledge relates to the study of the sun, the moon and other luminaries of the sky. The knowledge of the astronomical science is necessary from various points of view, such as, the calculation of the month, year, season and the appropriate time for the performance of various rites and rituals.

(3) *Brahma-vidyā*

This amounts to the knowledge of the relationship of the teacher to the students and rests on the exposition of learning and ultimately establishes their relationship for the furtherance of the cause of learning in the land. It is only through the mutual understanding and co-operation of both the teacher and the student that the lamp of learning can remain ever burning in the society. The torch of knowledge is lit by the personal touch of the teacher and the disciple should be able to hold it high for the flowering of wisdom in the land. It is only from the teacher that a student can learn right from the alphabet to the formation of sentences with proper articulation, intonation, pitch and several other aspects of phonetics and philological science for the correct pronunciation and interpretation of the Vedic text.

(4) *Suprajā-nirmāṇa-vidyā*

It is the aspiration of every householder to beget long-lived and illustrious progeny⁴¹. For this the parents should lead a religious life. They should try to build up a healthy home charged with moral atmosphere. The purifying atmosphere yields them no other benefit than the sweet joy of welcoming healthy, lovely and illustrious angels on their laps. The

41 Cf. B.U., 1.5.17

Upanisadic seers put great emphasis on begetting healthy and virtuous sons. It is with the help of such worthy progeny that society may prosper and civilisation may proceed without break.

(5) *Adhyātma vidyā*

To acquire the knowledge of the self is the ultimate end of all human beings. This *Adhyātma vidyā* teaches that the self in all is one and the same. Self knowledge requires self restraint. It can be acquired only under the guidance of a spiritual teacher and also by following the long established rules of spiritual discipline that are imposed by his preceptor. It is through the guidance and help of the teacher that he can realise the self.

These are the five knowledges that every human being should try to understand, realise and follow in order to make his life successful and worthy. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* we find a warm appreciation of law when it declares,

Law or righteousness is the *ḥatra* (power) of the *ḥatṛiṇa*, 'Therefore nothing is higher than the law. So even a weak person rules a stronger with the help of the law as with the help of a king. Thus the law is what is called the true. And if a man declares what is true, they say he declares the law, and if he declares the law, they say he declares what is true.'

Thus *Dharma* and *Satya* mean the same thing. There can be no better definition of law than this⁴². A proper administration of law is the foundation on which the civilization of a country may be built up. So the *Upanisadic* seers paid due attention to this branch of knowledge.

42. B.U. 1.4.14

ya naita vyābhavati, tacchreyo rēnamāyasaṁjāta dharmam
tadetat kṣatrasya kṣatṛam yaś dharmāt tatmad dharmāt
paratē naiti. atha abhivyāta bāṇādmasvī dīpam, a dharmāt
yathā rājā evam yaś tat a dharmāt satyam vai tat
tatmad satyam va tatmadāt dharmam va, it dharmam va
vaidīkāt satyam vadati. etadhyasaṁjātaḥ satyam bhavati

Method of Instruction

Before entering into the discussion of the method of instruction recorded in the *Upaniṣads* we should bear in mind that the *Upaniṣadic* seers did not reject anything of the time honoured traditional lore of *Vedic* culture but visualised it from a new perspective. They reflected and tried to interpret in stead of merely repeating what their predecessors told and taught before. We do not, therefore, find any destructive criticism in them but we find a new assessment of moral and cultural values and a new method of interpretation and this interpretation is carried on by teacher after teacher in succession down the ages.

The *Upaniṣads* are composed by the different seers at different times independent of each other. In their observational sayings we find that they give the same idea and illustration but in a different setting not copying from one another. They possess an ardent spirit for search of truth and their statements are charged with perfect conviction in the validity and truth of what they say, moreover, their assertions are shorn of any desire for personal fame or gain.

In this connection we may mention that the seers of the *Upaniṣads* while revealing the truth to the inquirers they used technical terms, parables, and mysteries because they held the view that the gods love what is mysterious, and dislike what is

-obvious So says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹, 'parokṣeṇana, parokṣapriya
 na hi devāḥ pratyākṣa-dīyāḥ'

The method of teaching plays an important role in any system of education. In the age of the *Upaniṣads* as noticed earlier education was imparted by and large in residential type of institutions. It is necessary that every upper class *Āryan* youth is required to live for a minimum period of twelve years with a teacher called his *guru* and the method of teaching is largely residential cum tutorial in nature. The *Upaniṣadic* teachers resorted to various methods in imparting spiritual instruction to their disciples according to the necessities of discussion and standard of intellect of the pupils. Observes Max Muller on the method of teaching in the *Upaniṣadic* age,

"The *Guru* (teacher) who has himself formerly been student, should make his pupils read. He himself takes his seat either to the east or to the north, or to the north east. If he has no more than one or two pupils, they sit at his right hand. If he has more, they place themselves according 'as there is room. They then embrace their master and say, 'Sir, read. The master gravely says, 'Om', i.e., 'yes'. He then begins to say a *prāṇa* (a question), which consists of three verses. In order that no word may escape the attention of his pupils he pronounces all with the high accent and repeats certain words twice, or he says 'so' (*iti*) after these words. As the sense of words in Sanskrit depends upon certain peculiarities of pronunciation difficult of acquirement pupils are to repeat after the *Guru* sometimes several words, sometimes one at a time. After a section of three verses has gone through, each pupil has to repeat it again and again. About 180 verses were thus studied each day. The lecture then concludes with prayer verses and formulas, the pupil embraces his tutor, and is allowed to withdraw."²

1 B U. 4.2.2

2 F. Max Muller. *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*
 edited by Surendra Nath Sastri (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office 1969) pp. 460-3

In the *Pratīśākhya*³ of the *Rg veda* we find a brief account of the method of teaching that was in vogue in those days "At the beginning of each lecture the pupils embrace the feet of their teacher and say, "Read, sir" The teacher says "Om", and then pronounces two words or if it is compound, one When the teacher has pronounced one word or two, the first pupil repeats the first word, but if there is anything that requires explanation, the pupil says "Sir", and after it has been explained to him, the teacher says "Om" In this manner they go on till they have finished a *praśna* (question) which consists of three verses, or if there are verses of more than 40 to 42 syllables, or of two verses If they are *pankti* verses of 40 to 42 syllables each, a *praśna* may comprise either two or three, and if a hymn consists of one verse only, that is supposed to form a *praśna* After the *praśna* is finished, all of them have to repeat it once more, and then to go on learning it by heart, pronouncing every syllable with high accent After the teacher has first told a *praśna* to his pupil on the right, the others go round him to the right and this goes on till the whole *adhyaya* or lecture is finished, a lecture generally consisting of 60 *praśnas* At the end of the last half verse the teacher says 'Om', and the pupil replies 'Om', repeating also the verses required at the end of a lecture'

In this background let us now consider the various methods of teaching adopted by the teachers of the *Upanisads*

(1) Oral method

As there is no other method of recorded communication the *Upaniadic* seers, like their predecessors, have had to take recourse mainly to the oral method in imparting instruction to their students The method is found to be useful to the students particularly at a time when greater emphasis is laid on the study of the science of language The student can learn the language, its pronunciation, accent, pitch, etc., correctly from the teacher orally The students are required to repeat the words-

3 *Pratīśākhya* chapter XV Samharta Sambhita SI 10 Manu II 71 Visnu XXX 32 quoted by S. K. Das—*The Educational System of the Ancient Hindus*, (Calcutta the author, 1930), p 126

again and again exactly in the manner followed by the teacher and by the process of repetition they become able to commit to memory with accuracy whatever they learn orally from their teacher. The teachers attached considerable importance to correct pronunciation of the words. In fact purity in speech was regarded as a mark of culture since the age of the *Brahmaras*. In the *Taittirīya*⁴ we find the enumeration of some phonological factors like *mātrā* (quantity) *balam* (accent) *sāma* (euphony) and *santāna* (relations of letters). The students, as they are able to carry everything in their mind, can express their thought as freely as possible in the course of debate and discourse in the assembly or in the campus of grand sacrifices in times of need. The *Pratīśākhya* has formulated a number of minute rules as to the repetition of words, etc. The oral method of teaching of ancient India finds favour even with the modern educationists of the west. Rousseau in his *Emile* goes to the extent of saying that there is no use of books at all in any stage of education.

Regarding the method of education mention may be made of the principle of memorising and even learning by rote which occupies the first place. There are prayers for memory (*medhā*) 'May the Lord endow me with *medhā*, may we learn much and learn by the ear, and may we retain what we have thus learnt'. In the *Altareya*⁵ we find that there are prayers as to what is learnt may remain implanted in the mind and never to desert the learner. The teachers realise that everything can be retained in memory by repetition. In the *Pgveda*⁶ reference has been made of the learners repeating their lessons in concert after the teacher, as frogs do after the first showers with up-lifted voice⁷.

It is not to be understood that the teachers of ancient India tried to reduce the human brain into memory machine. They know that the memory is not the only faculty to be

4 T U, 12.

5 T U 14

6 A U, 11

7 Rg veda, 7, 103 5 & 9

trained and to be developed. Yāska⁸ says that the pupils are to read among themselves the text they have learnt and to reflect on the meaning of what they have learnt. It can also be seen from the most ancient prayer of India—the *Sāṃhitā* (*Gāyatrī*) prayer in which the reciter prays for the guidance of his thought and stimulation of his understanding. The seers realise that the observing and questioning alongwith memorising are the essential factors which can lead to the development of the human intellect.

Here it may be mentioned that even to-day memory work is encouraged at the level of primary education where some repeated cramming of things is considered to be necessary e.g., in getting by heart the multiplication table. From this it would appear that the ancient method of memory work is not altogether outdated but it has still a place in the scheme of our methods teaching various school subjects. 'Modern teachers', observes Nunn⁹, 'in their zeal for cultivating the 'self-activity' of children are prone to neglect the significance of the routine tendency. Reacting too far from unintelligent practices of former days, they avoid the repetition of the familiar, dismissing it as 'mechanical' or as 'mere memory work', with the implication that it is somehow out of place in modern methods. They forget that children delight in it for the sound biological reason that it is an indispensable means to mastery of their little world. The young teacher may then safely disregard the view that the repetition of 'tables', dates, grammatical paradigms, arithmetical or algebraic operation is unpedagogical because it has to be forced upon unwilling nature. The child who rejoices in his power to repeat the jingle 'Ena, dena, dina do' will not fail to delight in a mastery over more serious forms of routine'.

The usual method is to move from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, from the concrete to

8 *Virukta*, 1 18

9 Sir Percy Nunn *Education—Its Data and first Principles* 3rd ed (London: Edward Arnold & Co. 1945 rpt 1970) pp 71-72.

the abstract. This is in evidence in all dialogues and discussions met with in the *Upaniṣads*

«(II) Question and Answer Method

The efficient imparting of instruction depends on the art of questioning. This method helps the teacher to understand whether the students are following him properly and promptly. The question and answer method if effectively used develops the topic for discussion and increases the reasoning faculty as well as the power of comprehension of the student. The teachers ask the question to ascertain the intellectual make-up and power of understanding of the student which gives the teacher necessary clue to find out the suitable points for emphasis or to supply the required information for the further advancement towards the goal. This question and answer method is also called the catechetical or the Socratic method so called after the name of the great Greek Philosopher and teacher.

The *Upaniṣadic* teachers usually use this method or in other words the mode of teaching in the *Upaniṣadic* age is essentially catechetical in nature. It is also evident from the fact that the *Upaniṣads* are composed in the form of a dialogue and the subject is explained by an intelligent and graded series of questions and answers. In the *Chāndogya*¹⁰ we find that the five great householders and theologians meet together to consider the nature of the *Vaiśānara self*. They approach Uddālaka a great sage who is engaged in the study of the *Vaiśānara self*. Uddālaka is afraid they may ask him more than he knows and suggests that they should all go together to king Aśvapati who knows the *Vaiśānara self* and ask him about the same. He receives them with due honour and before he begins to impart instruction he asks each of them in turn—Whom do you meditate on as the *Self*? Accordingly he first asks

aupamanyava kam tvam ātmānam upaśsa iti

“O Aupamanyava, whom do you meditate on as the *Self*?

Thus the teacher (Aśvapati) puts the question to gauge the depth of the pupil's knowledge. On this method of question and answer Śaṅkara says in his commentary (on C.U., 5-12-1) as,

'nanu ayamāṇyāḥ ācāryaḥ saṁ śiṣyaṁ prcchati iti naiṣa dosah, 'yad vettha tena mopasīda, tatasta ūrdhvaṁ vakṣāmi nyāya-darśanāt anyatrāpi ācāryasya apratiṣṭhānavati śiṣye pratibhotpādanārthah praśno dṛṣṭo' ajātaśatruḥ-akṛiṣa tadābhūt ? Kuta etadāgāt' iti.

'This is highly unfair that the teacher should question the pupils' is the objection. The answer—there is nothing wrong in this. The idea in the teacher's mind is "come to me and tell me what you already know, then I shall teach you what there is beyond that, and the method is quite fair. In other cases also, it has been found that a question has been put by the teacher to a pupil who is not very intelligent, in order to arouse his intelligence as it is evident in the case of Ajātaśatru, where did this (the Self) exist then ? Whence did it come ?"

In the *Bṛhādaranyaka* Śaṅkara further says that questions are asked so as to kindle the intellect of the student :

'kavīsa tadābhūt kuta etadāgāt etyetadubhayaṁ gārgye-ṇaiva prastavyamāsit, tathāpi gārgyena na prṣṭum iti nodāste ajātaśatruḥ; vadhaitavya eveti pravartate jñāpayiṣāmi eveti pratijñātavāt : (B.U., 2-1-16)

In fact these two questions should have been asked by Gārgya himself but he did not do so. Nevertheless, Ajātaśatru could not ignore it and began to impart instruction to Gārgya by questioning himself, contemplating on the fact that he should be made clear about it as promised earlier.

In the *Chāndogya* we are told that the sage, Nārada, has learnt all the *Vedas*, and still is unsatisfied, he approaches the teacher Sanat Kumāra for proper instruction on the *Supreme Self*. Then Sanat Kumāra asks Nārada to tell him what he has already learnt :

Nāradaḥ taṁ hovāca, yad vettha tena mopasīda tatasta ūrdhvaṁ vakṣyāmi

(C.U., 7-1-1)

To him Sanatkumāra then said, "Come to me with what you have already learnt. Then I will tell you still further. Again, in the same *Upaniṣad* we find that Uddālaka imparts instruction to his son Śvetaketu who has returned from his preceptor's house 'conceited, considering himself well read, and stern' only after asking what he has learnt about the *Supreme Self*?

The question and answer method can be termed as the *guru śiṣya samvāda* (dialogue between the teacher and taught). Knowledge is imparted by the teacher in *Upaniṣadic* age in the form of question and answer or in other words it may be said that the teaching of *Upaniṣads* often fall in the form of a dialogue between the teacher and the student where the subject is expounded and the problems are solved by an intelligent and graduated series of questions and answers. We can refer to some of the important dialogues that take place between the eminent teachers and the students to solve the mysteries of life and death and the attainment of final emancipation such as the dialogue between

- (i) Yājñavalkya and Janaka (B U., 1 5, 4 3)
- (ii) Yājñavalkya and Maitreyi (B U., 2-4)
- (iii) Yajnavalkya and Gārgya (B U., 3 5)
- (iv) Gargya and Ajātaśatru (B U., 2 1)
- (v) Uddālaka and Śvetaketu (C.U., 6)
- (vi) Aśvapati and five great house holders (C.U., 2 23)
- (vii) Janaśruti and Raikva (C.U., 4-1 to 3)
- (viii) Narada and Sanatkumāra (C U., 8)
- (ix) Bhṛgu and Varuna (T U., 3 1-3)
- (x) Naciketas and Yama (K U., II)

From these instances it can be seen that the method of teaching was catechetical in nature. We find that the pupil asks questions and the teacher discusses them at length to satisfy their queries. In the course of these discussions we find that the teacher uses all the familiar devices of oral teaching such as suitable illustration as in *Praśna* (2) stories as in *Lāṭhā* and parables as in *Kena* (3). However we should not bear in mind

that the students are only listening passively to what their teachers tell and the teachers on their part do not leave anything for them to think out for themselves. The teachers fully realise the need for ratiocination, introspection and contemplation on the part of the students. In fact, they prescribed *śravaṇa* (Hearing of the scripture), *manana* (reflecting on it) and *nididhyāsana* (steady meditation) as the gradual stages of knowing the *Absolute Reality*. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹¹ it has been declared :

ātmā vā are draśavyah śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsi-tavyah.

'The self, my dear, has to be visualised, to be heard about, to be reasoned about, to be constantly meditated upon'. Here we find that the triplet *śravaṇa*, hearing, i.e., acquiring information about the *Supreme Self* from external sources like the sacred texts, *manana*, intellection, i.e., assimilation, differentiation and elaboration of the knowledge so acquired, and *nididhyāsana*, i.e., constant meditation for grasping the meaning : or, for the realisation of that truth, has been prescribed for the realisation of the *Supreme Spirit*, the highest end of human life. Out of these three processes of learning, the *śravaṇa* itself called for six auxiliaries (*liṅgas*, phases) as mentioned in the following

*'upakramo'pasamhāro'bhyāso'apūrvatāphalam
arthavādopapattiśca liṅgaṁ tātparyanirṇaye'*

- (a) *Upakrama* and *Upasamhāra*—a formal ceremony to be performed prior to the study of the *veda* to be followed by appropriate *Upasamhāra* or termination.
- (b) *abhyāsa*—recitation of the text again and again or constant repetition of the subject taught.
- (c) *apūrvatā*—readily grasping the meaning of a new thing.
- (d) *phala*—comprehension of results or out-come.
- (e) *arthavāda*—study of explanatory text.
- (f) *upapatti*—arriving at the final conclusion.

The way of *śravaṇa* and others has been further described as

*śrotavyāḥ śrutnāḥ, ebhyaḥ mantavyo'scopapattibhiḥ
mativā ca satatam dhyaeya ete darsanahetavaḥ*

(The truth respecting the *Supreme Self*) should be learnt from the teaching of the sacred scripture i.e., the *Vedas* subjected to reasoning by means of arguments and, after such reasoning, constantly meditated upon, for these are recognised to the means of *darśana* i.e., visualising the ultimate truth. Thus by prescribing the process of *manana* i.e., reflection or cognition the teachers want to make the student mentally well equipped fortifying himself against possible future doubts and also to tackle the problems of life for himself. Thus observes Manu on the aspect of instruction -

*ācaryāt pādamaḍatte pādama śiṣyaḥ svamedhnyā
pādama sabrahmacāribhyaḥ pādama kṣālakramena tu*

The student learns only a fourth part of knowledge from his teacher, a fourth by self-study, a fourth from his fellow students and the last fourth by experience gained in future life.

So it is clear that self study is not totally ignored. Kamandaka also joins issue about the qualities of the intellect.

*śuśrūṣā śravaṇam caiva grahaṇaḥ dhāraṇam tatthā
ūhāpoho'arthajñānam tattvajñānam ca dhīgunāḥ*

The qualities of the intellect are enumerated as desire to hear, hence the earnest desire for knowledge, attention, comprehension or proper understanding, retention, ratiocination or consideration of pros and cons, grasping the correct sense, knowledge of truth. In fact in the *Taittirīya*¹² we find that the spiritual aspirant is praying for acquiring retentive power along with physical and moral health

*śarīraṁ me vicarṇanam juḥvā me madhumattanā, karṇa-
bhṛāṁ bhūri vīśruṇam, brahma-ah koṣo'si medīaḥ, āpihitaḥ,
śrutam me gopāya*

"May my body be very active, may my tongue be exceedingly sweet, may I, with my ears hear abundantly. Thou art the sheath of *Brahman* veiled by intelligence pray, preserve my learning". In the system of education of the *Upaniṣadic* age there was no lecture system which is the main medium of instruction to-day in the educational institution. In the *Upaniṣad* we find that each student approaches his teacher with his personal problems and questions to be solved by the teacher with appropriate answers till they are satisfied. The teacher encourages the spirit of inquiry and allows the student to ask as many questions as he likes. In *Praśna* the teacher declares '*yathā kāmam praśnān prcchata*' you may ask question according to your desire. Thus the system of teaching is individual and the problem of each student is separately taken up according to his special need. Each student receives individual attention and gets the opportunity to improve according to his abilities. The teacher is in a position to judge the capacity of each student and to plan the teaching programme in a graded manner in accordance with the capacity of the student and thereby leaving no scope for any waste of energy and time.

The study of any subject is thus carried on with sufficient attention and due care by the teacher in graded steps for the attainment of proficiency of the student within a prescribed period. Some of the eminent western educationists like Prot Royalists put much emphasis upon conversation as a means of developing mental faculties.

The catechetical mode of teaching under a *Guru* is followed and supplemented by academic meetings, educational conferences and congresses and *parisads* (the congregation of the learned). We shall consider these aspects in the following chapter.

Along with the question-answer method, we find traces of another modern method which is known as group discussion. We find in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* one of the best instances of group discussion method. In this *Upaniṣad* we find that Yājñavalkya while engaged in the discussion of a secret doctrine with another scholar in a public meeting says, "Give me your hand, gentle Ārtabhāga, we two only shall ascertain it ; let this question o

ours not be discussed in an assembly. Then they went out and discussed it.' This shows the method of group discussion. Similarly in the ninth *anvaka* of *sikṣa sālī* of the *Taittirīya* we find a picture of group discussion between three eminent seers, namely, Satyavaca, the son of Rathātara, Taponitya, son of pauruṣiṣṭhī and Naka, son of Maudgalya.

In the early days of modern education also we notice the same attitude of the teacher to ascertain the existing knowledge of his pupils in the class by short questionings in practical teaching work in class. We may refer to the Herbartian method of five steps. The whole idea in the preparation is to ascertain the existing knowledge of the pupils on the lesson and then to assimilate the new material with the "apperceptive mass." "Since the early sense—realists", observes Monroe¹³ "a general method had been sought, Herbart was the first to work this out in detail so that it becomes a method for the immediate process of instruction by the teacher. This method consists in a given series of steps, determined not by the character of the material, but by the way in which the human mind acts and human consciousness expands. These steps are to be followed in every unit of instruction which presumably is the recitation, though particular units may be determined rather by the subject matter than by time limits. There is no particular virtue in these steps themselves, nor is the goal that Herbart aims at to be attained by the mere formal application of these steps to a recitation. This method is a mere form to aid in the realisation of the great end of instruction a form of which a teacher who is successful in obtaining that end may be in entire ignorance and in the use of which even the teacher familiar with it should most often be unconscious."

Illustrative Aids In Teaching

The *Upaniṣadic* teachers are fully aware of the educative value of illustration in teaching. It is our common experience that illustration easily appeals to the senses and exercises the

13 Paul Monroe, *A text book in the History of Education* (New York, London: Macmillan, 1913) pp 636 637

imagination of the students. It also helps them to comprehend the matter in hand.

The sixth chapter of the *Chândogya* tells us of Śvetaketu. When he returns after completing education in the house of his preceptor his father inquires as to what he has learnt, and says to him, 'Have you inquired of your preceptor about that which makes the unheard of heard, unconsidered considered and unperceived perceived?' Śvetaketu answers in the negative and his father Uddālaka Āruni teaches him the true nature of the universal spirit with the help of beautiful illustrations and experiments.

He asks his son to bring a fruit of the *Nyagrodha* tree (the banyan tree) when Śvetaketu brings it, the father asks him to break it and tell him what he perceives after breaking the fruit. Śvetaketu says he finds countless seeds. The father asks him to break one of those tiny seeds and tell him what he finds. Śvetaketu replies, "Father, I have broken the tiny seed, but I find nothing therein. The father says, "My child, where you perceive nothing, there dwells [the mighty *Nyagrodha*. What you describe as nothing, out of it the vast banyan tree has come into existence. In fact, this great banyan tree has come into being from that finest essence which you fail to perceive with the naked eye. Thereby the father tells his son if he understands this finest essence then he will come to the understanding of the science of sciences. The whole world has that finest essence as its soul. That is Reality, that is *Ātman* 'That thou art, O Śvetaketu'¹⁴.

This is the illuminative instruction which the father gives to his son with the help of a concrete illustrative aid. Thus the teacher knew the method of using concrete visual illustrations for teaching the truth which is admired so much in modern education system.

14 C.U. 6-12. *nyagrodha*—*phalam ata āharet, idam bhagavaḥ iti bhindhīti, bhinnam bhagavaḥ, iti, kim atra paśyasīti, arya ivamā dhānāḥ bhagavaḥ, iti, asāṃ, angaḥkām bhindhīti bhinnā, bhagavaḥ, iti; kim atra paśyasīti, ra kim eṣa, bhagavaḥ iti, sa ya eṣo'rimā. atad atmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa eimā tattvam, śvetaketo iti.*

And again, the father directs his son, "Place this salt in a bowl of water and then wait on me in the morning" The son does as he is asked. The father says to him, "Bring me the salt which you placed in the water last night. The son having looked for it finds that it is not there, for, of course, it has been fully dissolved in the water.

The father asks "Taste it from the surface of water. How is it?" The son replies, "It is salty." "Taste it from the middle." How is it? The son replies, "It is salty." The father says "Throw it away and then wait on me." He does so musing thus "The salt (I put into the water, though melted and invisible), exists for ever." Then the father says to him, "In this body, forsooth you do not perceive the true (the pure Being) my son, but there indeed it is."

"That which is this subtle essence—in That has all this (universe), its Self, that is the True, That is the *Ātman*, That thou art, O *Śvetaketu*" ¹⁵

Here we find an illustration of what may be called an experimental method performed in a scientific laboratory for the investigation of truth.

The use of comparisons and examples which elucidate teaching is also considered to be another type of illustration. The *Upaniṣadic* teachers have made immense use of the illustrative technique.

15 CU, 6.13.1, 2 & 3

*lavanam etad udake yadhāya atī a ma pratar upasīdatha itī sa l a
tathā cakara tam hovaca, yad doṣā lava nam udake vadhaṁ anga
tad āharetī tadd havamśya na viveda yathā v linam evam*

*aṅgasyāntīd ācametī katham itī lavanam itī madī ya t
aco netī kaṭī am itī lavanam itī antad ācametī katham itī
lavanam itī abhīpraśya tad atha mopasīdatha itī tadd ha tatī a
cakara tacclāśvat samvartate tam hovaca atra yava kīla sat
saumya na nibhalayase atraive kīla*

*sa ya eṣo nimā antad ātī nyam idam savyam tat satyam sa
atmā, tat tvam asi śvetaketo, itī*

In the same *Upaniṣad*¹⁶ Uddālaka says to his son, "As the bees, oh, my son, make honey by collecting the juice of different trees into one undifferentiated mass, and as these juices have no discrimination, so that they might say, 'I am the juice of this tree; I am the juice of that tree'; in the same manner, my son, all these creatures, when they have become merged in the *Supreme Reality*, know not that they are merged in the *sat* or *Ātman*". And again, "These rivers, my son, flow, the eastern towards the west, the western towards the east. They go just from the sea to sea. They become, indeed, sea. When they mingle into the sea as these rivers know not." 'I am this one, I am that one', in the same way, my son, all creatures here though they have come forth from the *Supreme Being* and pass away into the same *Being* know not, we have come forth from *Being*".

Thus Uddālaka imparts instruction to his son by these beautiful illustrative comparisons which have made the lesson easily comprehensible and greatly interesting. Further, it may be mentioned that the *Upaniṣadic* teachers in their residential institutions build altars, light the sacrificial fire, chant the *vedic* hymns and offer the offering. The teacher explains the formula and ritual with their inner meanings to the student participating in the sacrificial rites performed by the teacher. Here the students get the opportunity to learn by seeing and this may be cited as an instance of a real and proper audio-visual training method. Thus the students get practical training while studying the *vedas*.

16. C.U., 6.9.1 & 6.10.1

yathā, saumya madhu madhukṛto nistīṣṭhanti, nānātya
vānām vṛkṣjānām rasān samavahāram ekatām rasam gamayanti
te yathā tatra na vivekam lavante, amuṣyāham vṛkṣasya
raso'smi, amuṣyāham vṛkṣasya raso'smiti, evam eva khalu,
saumya, imāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ satī sampadya na viduḥ satī sam-
pādi māha iti.

Again—Imāḥ saumya, nadyaḥ purastāt prōcyaḥ syandante
pascāt prōcyaḥ tāḥ samudrāt samudram evōpīyanti, sa samudra
eva bhavati, tā yathā tatra na viduḥ, tām aham asmi tām
aham asmiti.

evam eva khalu, saumya, imāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sata āgamyā na
viduḥ sata āgacchāmāha iti.

The Method of Proceeding from the Concrete to the Abstract

The teaching of the *Upaniṣads* centres round the speculation of the seers on God and Soul the reconciliation of one with the other and in establishing the spiritual unity of all beings. In fact it rests with the abstract truth of the consistent divine revelation. The *Upanisadic* teacher fully realises that it is not possible on the part of the disciple to arrive at the abstract truth all of a sudden or independently. They also realise that concrete illustrations are easily comprehensible for the students. If the students study each example and examine them carefully, they can arrive at a general conclusion. From the study of particular fact they can arrive at the general truth. This is the mode of arriving at abstraction. Abstraction or generalisation arrived at by the inductive process is best understood and well remembered.

In the *Taittirīya* we find that this method is best illustrated in the instruction imparted by the great sage Varuna to his son Bhṛgu. Here the teacher starts his instruction with the concrete and ends in abstract. We find how Bhṛgu is instructed by his father, Varuṇa, to know *Brahman* step by step from the concrete to the abstract, from *anna* (food) to *Ānanda* (Bliss), from the matter to the spirit as the ultimate reality of the universe. The father-cum teacher makes his son cum student arrive at this conclusion by progressive analysis of the constitution of the universe step by step and realises that behind matter lies the deepest and subtlest reality. In the *Praśna* also we find that the same method of teaching has been adopted. The students are taken from the gross to the subtle principle of life revealing one by one the folds of matter that envelop the spirit.

Again, from this we can easily infer that the usual practice of the teacher is not to furnish the students with clear-cut and ready made answers but to leave the problems to them to work out fully by themselves, and thereby they intend to arouse the spirit of inquiry and guide them step by step correcting their errors as and when necessary. Thus Varuṇa, the great teacher while instructing his son Bhṛgu, we find that he contends himself with indicating only in general terms the features of *Brahman*.

and leaves to his son, the search and discovery of his exact content by dint of reflection and ratiocination. Thus the method of giving broad outlines or hints and direction is repeated not less than four times and it is only on the fifth occasion that the son has been able to comprehend the true nature of *Brahman*.

Then again, we can easily notice that the *Upaniṣadic* teachers use the devices of definition, enunciation and examination in imparting instruction to their disciples. In the *Taittirīya* itself we find that *Brahman* has been enunciated as the principle to be visualised through the medium of food, life, mind, etc. Thus the five levels of characterisation are portrayed and *Brahman* is finally identified as bliss after the examination of the tentative categories one after another as mentioned. The said *Upaniṣad* offers two definitions of *Brahman* of which the first one is *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma* which means *Brahman* is self-existent, omniscient and infinite.

The second definition of *Brahman* is '*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayanty abhisamvāsanti*'.

That from which all these beings are born, that, by which, when born they are sustained that unto which, when departing, they enter.

Some such definitions of *Brahman* have been given in some other *Upaniṣad* as well viz., S.U., 3-2 ; M.U., 2-2-2.

The definition of *Brahman* as given here by the father furnishes the son with the necessary spirit to be meditated upon to liberate oneself from the bondage of this world. It has been made abundantly clear that his creation of the world is not merely projecting something into existence which is external to *Brahman*. *Brahman* enters into the created being living and non-living i.e., the creation is the self-formation of *Brahman* into the shape of the manifested world of reality '*tat sṛstvā tadevānuprāviṣat*'. The universe is good, being the manifestation of *Brahman*. But the process of manifesting does not affect the transcendent perfection of *Brahman*. The transcendent becomes manifested without losing its transcendence and pristine purity.

Varuna exhorts his son to have an ardent longing for the *Brahman* by the knowledge of which he can attain liberation from the chain of transmigratory existence. Here the definition as it were, serves as the starting points of inquiry of a spiritual life for the realisation of the Supreme goal of human existence, from this it can be seen that self-education was recognised as proper method of acquiring the highest knowledge. We see how Bhṛgu, son of Varuna approaches his father and how the mode of father's reply finds out *Brahman* by meditation. This makes the son plunged into thought for each time he goes to his father to announce his results of discovery he obtains the self same reply 'find out'. Finally Bhṛgu got the answer for himself that *Ānanda* is *Brahman*—happiness that sustains all creations. This is the *vidyā* Bhṛgu learnt and taught the humanity for its benefit. This is how by laborious self-examination and self education he attains self satisfaction.

It can therefore be said that the *Upaniṣadic* teachers did not attempt to instil ideas simply to be stored in the brain of the student. The teachers absorbed the students and rendered proper guidance to improve their natural faculties and also tried to bring out the latent qualities of the students, and as such self education was regarded as the best kind of education.

We find another very illuminating and interesting instance of the method of proceeding from the concrete to the abstract in the teaching of the great spiritual teacher, Sanatkumāra to Narada who is conversant with all the branches of learning extant in those days. Here, we find, the teaching begins with 'mantra' and 'karma' and ends with 'Ātman' (*ātman vedam sarvam iti* only from the self does everything come into being) called progressively 'Satya' 'sukha' 'Bhūman' and 'Aham' ¹.

Narada approaches Sanatkumāra and bewails his ignorance of the science of *Ātman* and begs for enlightenment so that he may overcome the sorrows of the worldly existence. Sanatkumāra takes the pupil from where he stands and works out a ladder of categories to confer upon his disciple the secret of his

spiritual life. All types of categories with physical and mental are mobilized to serve as rungs of the ladder ; the teacher shows that each succeeding category surpasses the preceding one in subtlety and merit. Thus soon after the rung of the category of *prāṇa* is reached Nārada seems to be satisfied with his inquiry. Then teacher himself introduces a new type of category called 'Satya' and Nārada wants to be instructed about this principle.

The teacher there-after proceeds to indicate the steps necessary for the attainment of *Satya* or truth. They are 'Vijñāna, (understanding), *manana*, (reflection), *śraddhā* (faith), *niṣṭhā* (steadfastness), '*kṛti*' (concentration). These are the five steps prescribed to attain the knowledge of *Brahman*. Dewey in his book '*How we think*' has enumerated the following steps which are strikingly similar with those of Vācaspati's steps¹⁸ mentioned in the commentary to *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* (51)

(1) A problem and its location (*Adhyayana* and *śabda*)

(2) Suggested solutions and selection of a solution (*ūha* and *suhṛtprāpti*)

(3) Action—(application) (*Dāna*). The five steps for the realisation of the meaning of a philosophical truth. are (1) *adhyayana* (hearing of words from the teacher) (ii) *śabda* (comprehension of meaning) (iii) *ūha* (reasoning, investigation leading to generalisation) (iv) *suhṛt-prāpti* (agreement of or confirmation by a teacher and a fellow-student) (v) *dāna* (application or the process of placing discriminative wisdom). Of these the first two refers to *śravaṇa* and the third to *manana* of the triplet *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* which are recognised as the means of realising the highest truth.

18. *Vidhivadgurumukhād adhyātma vidyānāmākṣara svarūpa grahaṇa madhyayanam. prothamā siddhiḥ. tatkāryam savdah savdajanītam arthajñānamupalakṣyaṭi kārye karanopacārāt sā dvitīyā siddhiḥ. ūhaḥ—tarkah āgamāvirodhī nyāyenā—gamārthparikṣanam. Sā tṛtīyā siddhiḥ suhṛtprāptiḥ—suhṛdam guruḥṣyaśabrahma—cārīrām sam vādakānām prāptiḥ suhṛtprāptiḥ sā siddhiscaturthī. 'dānam' ca śuddhiviveka jñānasya aviṣayah siddhiḥ sā ca sāvāsanasamāyavi-
payāsānām parihārera vivekaśākṣātkāryasya svacchoppravāhe
vasthūpanam. Seyampañcamī siddhiḥ.*

Nārada is taught by Sanatkumara that *satya* is identical with *sukha* (joy) Sanatkumara then frames a definition of 'sukha' and says that only the *bhūman*, the infinite is *sukha*. In fact the teacher likes to instruct that *satya* means *Brahman*. *Brahman* is of the nature of *sukla* or *aśanda* (as in T U). Therefore *satya* is identical with *sukha*. Sanatkumara then elucidates the concept of *bhūman* and also frames a definition of it. Nārada then asks 'On what is the *bhūman* established?' Sanatkumara replies that it is established in its own glory—'Sic mahimni'. The Supreme *Ātman* identified with *bhūman* is described as *sa eva idaṁ sarvaṁ*. He alone is all this. Thus it is resolved that if the *bhūman* is all this, the knowing self cannot stand or remain outside the range of it. Hence Sanatkumara finally instructs what he calls

Ahankārādeśa—comprehension of *Brahman* as one's own ego—I am all this and this is the culmination of the process. Thus this *ātman* has progressively been called *satya*, *Sukla*, *Bhūman* and *aśam* and is said to have transcended *prāṇa* which in its turn transcends a number of lower categories.

Thus the spiritual teacher declares to his disciple bewailing his ignorance of the knowledge of *Ātman* that he who sees, thinks and understands the *Ātman* 'who is all this (*atmaiva idaṁ sarvaṁ*)' will find in the *Ātman* itself all kinds of joy. He becomes *Ātmarati*, *Ātmakṛiḍa*, *Ātmamithuna*, *Ātmananda* and *Sārāt*.

The Scientific Method

The *Upaniṣadic* seers possess unusual powers of observation and they use them to the full and their teaching is ultimately based on empirically observable fact. We find the elucidation of this method in *Taittirīya* where the genesis of the world is given.

*tasmād vā etasmād atmana ākaśas sambhūtaḥ ākāśād ājyaḥ
vāyor agniḥ agner apah adbhyaḥ pṛthivī pṛthivī yā ośadhyaḥ
ośadhibhyo annam annāt puruṣaḥ*

'From that very soul (*Ātman*) verily, ether arose ; from ether, the air , from air, fire , from fire, water , from water, the earth , from the earth, herbs , from herbs, food , from food, the person' Dr Radhakrishnan observes that there is a steady ascent from the inorganic to the organic, from the organic to the sentient, from the sentient to the rational life. The rational has to grow into the spiritual which is as far above the purely rational as the rational is above the sentient¹⁹.

We see in the *Mundaka* which begins with the cosmological query of Śaunaka '*Kasmīnu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam, idam vijñātam bhavati*'

"What is that which being known, everything else is known." Here we find that the great teacher Angirasa imparts his instructions by applying both the methods of proceeding from the concrete to the abstract as well as the scientific method regarding the theory of cosmogony. And the reply as given by the teacher points to the All course as the goal of knowledge.

The teacher advances the first of cosmogony as

*tapasa cīyate brahma, tato'nnam abhijāyate
annat prāno manah satyam lokah karmasu camṣtam
jah sarvajñah sarva-vid yasya jñanamayam tapah
tasmād etad brahma nama rupamannam ca jayate.*

(M U , 1-1-8 & 9)

By contemplative power *Brahman* swells. From that food is produced. From it life, mind, the reals, the worlds, the rituals, in the rituals, immortality. He who is all knowing and all wise, whose penance or austerity consists of knowledge from him individual beings and nourishment for creatures spring forth. Then again we find another kind of cosmogony in the same *Upaniṣad* as

*etasmā jāyate prano manah sarvendriyaṇi ca
kham vāyur jyotiḥ āpah pṛthivī vīśvasya dhārini*

(M U , 2-1-3)

19 Dr S Radhakrishnan *Religion and Culture*, (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 1968), p. 9

from the primeval heavenly person—without body, without *prāṇa*, and without mind—were born in order *prāṇa*, mind, the senses, ether, air, light, water and earth the container of all. Here the same method as in *Taittirīya* mentioned earlier has been adopted.

Dr Radhakrishnan remarks that those who attempt to construct by reasoned argument a theory of ultimate being from a survey of fact of nature are adopting the scientific method.⁹⁰

Progressive Method

In the first three sections of the chapter eight of *Chāndogya* we find an illustration where the teacher has worked out a plan for instructing the students of lesser calibre in a progressive manner to help them realise the Highest Truth. The *Upaniṣad* teacher fully realised that all the students are not equally endowed with the same mental equipment and hence the pupils of lesser calibre should be led gradually in a planned and systematic way to the knowledge of the absolute Truth.

At the beginning of the chapter eight of the said *Upaniṣad* Śamkara has clearly brought out the process of instructing those who are not fortunate enough to possess superior intelligence to grasp the truth directly. He says,

*Yadyapi digdeśa kālādibhedasūnyam brahma 'sadekāme-
vādvityam' 'atmavedam sarvām iti śaśh saptamayoradhigatam,
tathāpi iha mandabudhinaḥ dig deśādibhedavad vastu ityevam
bhāvitā budhirna sakṛate sahasa paramarthavisaṃśaya kartumitī,
iti anadhigamya ca brahma na puruṣārthasiddhiḥ iti tadadhiga-
mīya hṛdayapundarikadeśa upadeśavyaḥ yadyapi sat samyak pra-
śaṅkaviśayam nirgunācātmatatattvam, tathāpi mandaruddhinām
gunavattvasya īśatīat satyakāmādi gunatattvāṇa śaktavyam
tathā, yadyapi brahma vidam stradi viśayebhyaḥ śvayam uparamo
bhavati, tathāpi anekajanma-viśayasevābhyaśanīta viśaya viśaya
śrīṇā na sahasanivartayitum sakṛate, iti brahmācāryadīśādīna
śiṣeṣo vidhātavyaḥ tathā, yadyapi ātmāikatva vidam gamitṛ gaman-
agantavyābhāṣād a vidyadīpēśatīnimitakṣaye gagana va vidyudd*

*bhūta iva vayurḍ dagdhendhana ivāgniḥ svātmanyeva nivṛttiḥ, tathāpi gamtṛgamanādivāsītabuddhīnām hṛdayadeśaguṇavīṣṭa brahmo pāsakānām mūrddhyanyayā nadyā gatiṛvaktavyā, ityṣṭa-mah prapāṭhaka ārabhyate|| dig-deśa-guṇagatīphalabhedaśūnyam hi parāmārthasat advayaṁ brahma mandabuddhīnāmasadiva prati-bhāti sanmārgasthāstavadbhavantu, tataḥ śanaī paramārthasādapi grāhayiṣyānūti manyate śrutiḥ.*²¹

It may briefly be said that without understanding the real nature of *Brahman* i.e., as *Sat*, *Ātman*, *Bhūman* and *Brahman*, the highest aspiration of a student who is a seeker of truth cannot be fulfilled; hence, for the benefit of the dull persons, it is necessary to convey the teaching indirectly, by indicating, in the first instance, the particular spot within the Lotus of the Heart as the abode of the Self, the *Brahman*. Secondly, though the Self is the object of true cognition of 'Being' and is devoid of all qualities, yet for the benefit of person with crippled powers of comprehension who meditate upon *Brahman* as being possessed of qualities, that it is found necessary to speak of qualities or *gunas* as belonging to him as 'being of unfailing resolution' and so forth. Thirdly, in case of persons who have realised '*Brahman*' intellectually it is not easy to give up all at once, the longing for objects of sense-gratification; hence it is found necessary to enjoin upon them such detailed means of accomplishing the end as 'celibacy', nonattachment and the like attributes. Fourthly, persons who have realised the unity of Self on the disappearance of the root cause of creation nescience or *avidyā* attain final liberation from worldly bondage. But there are persons whose minds are still beset with diversities and who are still meditating upon *Brahman* as abiding within the heart and as endowed with qualities; for the benefit of these persons, it has to be pointed out that at the time of expiry they pass out of the body through an Artery in the Head. It is, therefore, contended that persons of dull intellect regard the *Brahman* as non-existent though the *Brahman* in fact is one Absolute Existence without a second. The contention of the

21. C.U., 8.1.

smṛti text is that though the teaching imparted to these intellectually handicapped pupils at the initial stage is not the absolutely right one yet these dull persons are to be put on the right track gradually leading them to the ultimate knowledge of the Absolute Truth

According to Huen Tsang the method of teaching in *Brahmanical* school was meant more "to rouse the disciples to activity and skilfully win them to progress than to instruct them in dogma they instruct the inert and sharpen the dull when disciples intelligent and acute are addicted to idle shirking, the teachers doggedly persevere repeating instruction until their training is finished ""

In addition to the various methods of teaching adopted by the eminent teachers an ancient tradition of India gives an exquisite picture of communication in silence

*Citram vafatarormule vddhastisyah gururjva
gurostu maunam vjakhyanam sisjāstu chinnaśamśayah* ""

"Look at the foot of that banyan tree What a wonder what a beauty, How aged the pupil, but how youthful the teacher, All the doubts of the pupil stand resolved by the teacher's eloquence of silence " ""

Prof Ranade has remarked that there is not one method alone which is adopted by the *Upanisadic* philosophers He has enumerated as much as ten methods in his '*Survey of Upanisadic philosophy*', viz ,

- (1) the enigmatic method,
- (2) the aphoristic method,
- (3) the etymological method,

22 Thomas Watters *on Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (London, Royal Asiatic Society, 1904) p 160

23 Śamkara—*Dakṣiṇā murti*—12.

24 S R Ranganathan *Five Laws of Library Science* 2nd ed. (Bombay Asia Publishing House 1957), p 353

- (4) the mythical method,
- (5) the analogical method,
- (6) the dialectic method,
- (7) the synthetic method,
- (8) the monological method or the method of soliloquy,
- (9) the ad-hoc or temporising method, and lastly,
- (10) the regressive method, and all these methods are supported by suitable examples drawn from the various *Upanisads* under different contexts.

In summing up of our discussion we may point out that the pupil played the main role in the teaching method of the *Upaniṣadic* age and not the teacher who did so in the *Vedic* age. The method was mostly characterized by catechism in which the problems were discussed fully and finally arrived at a solution through graduated series of questions and answers between the pupils and the teachers. In view of the nature of teaching method the educational system could also be described as discursive and argumentative. In the process the student could not remain simply as a passive listener to his teachers but was required to be mentally alert and conscious. He was required to solve the problems by himself through self-introspection and meditation. Thus their mental faculty and power of imagination could develop indirectly according to their abilities and aptitudes.

In conclusion it may be said that the *Upaniṣadic* teachers gave the ideas of the methods of effective teaching some of which are still in use in modified forms. The fact is that education is dynamic and is not static. With the progress of time and change of social and cultural life some modification and adjustment of these methods were to be made to meet the demands of our present time. But this could not be done as the values and standards of teaching were lost to the successive generation for certain social and political upheavals for which no constructive criticism could be undertaken for improving upon them to suit

the modern times But it must be pointed out here that these methods of ancient teachers were effectively used when education was confined to a select class but they cannot be used in the same form and manner in the case of mass education to-day Education is expanding and on the basis of democracy every body must be educated according to his age, ability and aptitude This democratic principle has necessitated a comprehensive system of education in which various modern methods and aids are to be used in consonance with the changing values and ideals

Organisation of Seats of Learning

Knowledge in ancient India, which was handed down from generation to generation, was fostered and propagated through various seats of learning. In course of time new commentaries and interpretations to various *Vedic* texts were developed as a natural consequence in different sections of the community and as such a network of *Vedic* schools spread over the country. In these ancient seats of learning there prevailed a perfect harmony between theory and practice, thought and life, ideals and practices. Education aimed at the all-round development of faculties and the building up a perfect intellectual life of the people. These centres of learning served as the centres of culture and civilization and exercised a profound influence in moulding the lives of the community in accordance with the ideals embodied in the *vedic* texts, created a new outlook towards life and learning, and from these centres radiated new light in all directions.

Education in India was never regarded as an end in itself but as a means to an end, viz., the knowledge of the Absolute, i.e., realisation of the *self*, the attainment of the highest bliss. It can be seen that the performance of sacrifice and rituals was also directed as means to achieve this end of spiritual development. Never-the-less great emphasis was laid on the study of the sacred texts. The importance of study technically called *Svādhyāya* has been greatly stressed throughout the entire bulk of the *Vedic*

Literature In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹ *Siddhyāya* has been regarded as a form of sacrifice to the *Brahman* by which an imperishable world is attained

Patañjali in his *Yogasūtra* has also put great emphasis on *siddhyāya* as can be seen from the following

(i) *tapah siddhyāy esārapranidhānāni kṛyā yogah* (2 1)

(ii) *śaścasantoṣatapah siddhyāy esārapranidhānāni nityamāh*
(2 32)

Vyasa has explicitly explained the word *Siddhyāya* as
 'siddhyāyah mokṣasāstrānām adhyāyanam prapañjapō va *Siddhyāya* is the study of the science of liberation or the repetition of *Pranava* (or the syllable *Om*) He has further mentioned that *Siddhyāya* is the means of visualising the Gods, the *ṛṣis* and the *siddhas* "*Siddhyāy ādiṣṭha devatā samprajogah* (2-44) *Siddhyāya* has been defined as

Vedānta-śātarudrīya prapañjā japaṁ budhāh

*Sattva śuddhī karam pumsam siddhyāyam paricakṣate*²

Siddhyāya is the study of the scriptures and recitation of mantras which leads to the purity of mind

We shall now try to discuss precisely the organisation of seats of learning devoted to the cause of propagation of education throughout the country First of all, it may be mentioned that education was imparted orally In this traditional system of oral teaching the role of the teacher can never be overestimated 'The spread of knowledge, was virtually controlled by the teachers who store the entire stock of knowledge in their brains "The spread of such knowledge", remarks Dr R K Mukherjee, 'is thus absolutely determined by the choice and sweet will of the knower who has the liberty to dictate on what terms he would exercise his choice In the inner chambers of his soul have been stored up the literary treasures to which no one can have access unless he consents to unlock them with the key he holds' ³ The pupils who thus received education from

1 *Śa Brā* 9 5 6 3 *ye ha vai ke ca brahmā ime dyāuḥ pṛthivī antareṇa svadhyāyo haiva teṣāṁ paramatā kṣīṇā*

2 *Vide* S R Radhakrishnan *The Principal Upaniṣads* p 357

3 Dr R K Mukherjee *Ancient Indian Education* 4th ed (Delhi Motilal Banarsidass 1969) p 215

the teacher's mouth} became in their turn the custodians of that knowledge. 'Indeed, every teacher took to his profession', observes Dr. Mukherjee, 'as a supreme religious duty and as he used to take a number of pupils he would have the satisfaction of finding that he has been able to create in them several centres and sources of knowledge where there was only one such centre and source, and that he has, by his personal contribution, amply repaid the debt he owes to the cause of the [culture of his country'.⁴ Thus it can be deduced from this fact that the teacher was the only source of knowledge and the pupil had to solely depend upon him for his educational achievement. The educational system was greatly influenced by three major factors, viz.,

- (i) residence at the teacher's house,
- (ii) oral method of teaching, and a
- (iii) personal touch—a communion of souls of the teacher and the taught.

Teacher's Residence as Institution :

In the age of the *Upanisad* the normal procedure was that the pupil at a tender age goes to the residence of the teacher, a settled householder for receiving education leading to the development of body, mind and spirit. The teacher is used to admit the pupil to his residential institution after the performance of the initiation ceremony of the student and this entry is regarded as the second birth, i.e., spiritual birth of the pupil for obtaining the knowledge par-excellence. As an instance of this institution we may cite Satyakāma Jābala⁵ who goes to the residence of his preceptor at a tender age and spends several years by tending his cattle and doing other menial work, and, later on, he himself as a teacher admits to his residential institution as his disciple Upakosala Kāmālayana⁶ who tends his sacrificial fire for twelve years. Thus the teacher's residence serves as the seat of learning. The residences of the famous

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 217-2.

5 C.U., 443.

6 *Ibid.*, 410-1.

teacher Svaidayana Śaunaka and of Pippalāda were well known in the *Upaniṣads*. Band of scholars gathered round them for discussion and contributions were made to the advancement of knowledge and diffusion of culture from the residential institutions of the eminent teachers of the age.

Oral Tradition :

We have already noticed that the entire bulk of literature in existence in ancient India was imparted orally and the knowledge was thus handed down from age to age. The knowledge formulated by the experience of the individual sages was imparted orally to their disciples residing in their residence and thus the knowledge grew, developed and supplemented in a particular family, and in course of time different opinions and traditions took shape in different parts of the country. As the different traditions grew in number, some learned individuals engaged themselves in compiling the diverse opinions and traditions on each subject into a harmonious unit and tried to trace them as far as possible to their original exponent. Then again these compilations were transmitted by oral tradition, and were not written down.

Thus since the dawn of *Vedic* civilization, we find that the years which one in modern times spends at school and at University were spent by the sons of ancient India in learning from the mouth of a teacher, their sacred literature. Thus the *Vedic* learning was kept up in unbroken succession due to this oral learning. Teaching came to be regarded as one of the compulsory religious duties of the people, one of the great *yajñas* or sacrifices.

Personal Touch in Education :

The traditional method of oral teaching brought about a close connection between the teacher and the taught. The teacher's house was the meeting ground of mind with mind and soul with soul. Thus there was always a personal touch, a human element, a never flagging zeal and inspiration in such instruction which helped to make it a vital and not a lifeless, mechanical process ; it was a reciprocity of life, a communion.

of souls. In fact the system of education was residential-cum tutorial and the cultural heritage of the country was thus preserved and propagated for several thousands of years in ancient India.

The time-honoured system of oral tradition was supplemented for the preservation and propagation of the literary tradition by a variety of institutions known as *Śākhās*, *Caraṇas*, *Parīṣads*, etc., which were of the nature of assemblies, academies, literary or religious guilds and the like. These institutions served as the centres of learning where learning was conserved, discussed, interpreted and communicated by successive generation of teachers and pupils hailing from different parts of the country. We shall now try to discuss the other types of the seats of learning.

Śākhās and Caraṇas :

In ancient India there was no written literary document which could serve as a medium of communication of knowledge. The method of teaching in vogue as we have already noticed in those days was oral and consequently there was no outward existence of the ancient lore in book-form but was preserved in memory and passed on from the teacher to the taught through oral transmission. The bulk of knowledge was handed down in the families and a new candidate who would learn it by heart would become a new branch (literary *śākhā*). As a result of this process different recensions of the ancient lore began to develop and in course of time different societies were formed for the preservation of the different recensions of the sacred lore. These societies were otherwise known as *caraṇas*. In the *caraṇas* there was the integration of scholars, teachers and students. A very close bond of fellowship grew up among the members of the same *carana* or school of *vedic* study. Each *caraṇa* had its own arrangement of the *vedic* texts and its own method of pronunciation as well as application of the texts concerned to ritualistic ceremonies. The original relationship by blood of the *Gotra* was now replaced by one of cultural relationship or *Vidya-Vamsa*. "The establishment of these *caraṇas*", observes Manning, "constituted a league of Brahmans powerful to resist interference and

also brought learned men into association and strengthened those powers of learning and retaining which established their supremacy."⁷

The *Vedic* lore which was transmitted by oral tradition generation after generation was liable to undergo some changes in it from person to person as the human element predominated it consciously or unconsciously and thus the original sense of the *Vedic* hymn was going to be obscured and alien to the people in general. This was all the more so due to the increase of the complexity of the religious ceremonies demanding interpretations more and more and as a natural consequence, the institution of *śākhā* originated for the preservation of the meaning of the *Vedic* hymn and its application without discrepancy. So says Weber, "To attain these objects, those most conversant with the subject were obliged to give instruction to the ignorant and circles were formed around them of travelling scholars, who made pilgrimages from one teacher to another according as they were attracted by the fame of special learning."⁸

Observes Dr. Basu on this matter, "The sacred lore comprised by the term '*Veda*' was handed down from generation to generation through oral transmission. It is but quite natural and in the fitness of things that some variations in the mode of recitation, in the practical application of the mantras would take place according to time, clime and different teachers. Thus crept in variations in readings, variations in pronunciations and order of texts. These inevitable variations or changes lie at the root of different recensions or *Śākhās* of the *Veda*."⁹ The verbal transmission of the *Veda* through countless teachers and pupils from generation to generation covers a long passage of time and constitute the tradition (*sampradāya*) of *Vedic* study. These teachers and pupils, who in their turn, became teachers again

7. Mrs. Manning, *Ancient and Medieval India*, Vol I. (London: Wm. H. Allen & Co, 1869), p. 79.
8. Albrecht Weber, *The History of Indian Literature* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, & Company, 1878), p. 21.
9. Dr. J. R. Basu, *India of the Age of the Brahmins* (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pusthak Bhandar (1969), pp. XX-XXII.

in unbroken continuity are responsible for the creation of different *Śākhās* that cropped up at different times and places.

Some scholars are of opinion that every *śākhā* of the *Vedas* has its own *Upaniṣad* and according to them there are as many *Upaniṣads* as there are *śākhās* of the *Vedic* lore, while there are some other scholars that are inclined to assign an *Upaniṣad* to each *śākhā* of the *Veda*; thus the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Brāhmaṇa* bearing the same name, which in its turn appertains to the *Śakala-Śākhā* of the *R̥g-Veda*. The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* which belongs to the *Brāhmaṇa* of the same name, also belongs to this *Veda*.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* consisting of the seventh to ninth *Prapaṭhaka* of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* belongs to the *Taittirīya Śākhā* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Brāhmaṇa* bearing the same name of the *Sāma-Veda* and the *Brāhmaṇa* in its turn belongs to its *Kauthumī* or according to some *Rānāyanī śākhā*. The *Bṛhadāranyaka* and the *Śvetāsvatara* belongs to white and Black *Yajurveda* respectively. The *Īśa Upaniṣad* is the last chapter of the white *Yajurveda*, and is named after its opening words *Īśāvāsyam*. It is also called *Vājasaneyī Upaniṣad*. The *Kena Upaniṣad* which is named after its opening words belongs to a *Śākhā* of the *Sāmaveda* and is also known as *Talavakāra Upaniṣad* or *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad* belonging to a *Brāhmaṇa* of the same name.

From this it can be seen that the followers of each *śākhā* were anxious to have their own *Upaniṣad* and in fact they did not know that another *śākhā* of the same *Veda* had a similar body of esoteric doctrines. But, nevertheless, the identity of thought in all the *Upaniṣads* is remarkably striking.

Thus the *śākhās* which were independent of each other served as the seat of learning for those who enrolled themselves as the members of that *śākhā* or the seat of *Vedic* learning.

Parīṣad

Another type of important institutions which developed in course of time for the cultivation and propagation of learning is known as *Parīṣad* the literal meaning of which is "sitting."

round The term usually means the assembly of learned *Brāhmins* who give decisions on all matters relating to *Brāhmanic* religion and learning, in the *Upaniṣad* it has been used in the sense of an assemblage of advisers for discussing problems of philosophy The extension of a *pariṣad* is wider than that of a *carana* which as we have already noticed stands only for an ideal succession of teachers and pupils who learn and teach a particular branch of the *Vedas* The members of the same *carana* can become the follower of different *pariṣads* and as a matter of fact the follower of the same *pariṣads* may also become the member of different *caranas* "A *pariṣad* says Manning 'seems to have borne a certain resemblance to a European University It was a *Brāhmanic* settlement, an abode to which the Brahmins retired from the business of the world, and devoted themselves to contemplation, to the composition of sacred works, and also to giving advice and instruction to such younger members of their community as sought them or were committed to their charge. The number of Brahmins required to constitute a *Parīṣad* is not fixed it might be twenty one, seven five, or even 'three able men from amongst the *Brāhmins* in a village, who know the *Rgveda*, and keep the sacrificial fires 'form a *Parīṣad* '10 Max Muller¹¹ in his *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* says by quoting passages that according to modern writers, a *pariṣad* ought to consist of twenty one Brahmanas well versed in philosophy theology, and law, he further points out that different rules as to the constitution of a *Parīṣad* are laid down in later law books and do not describe the character of the *pariṣads* Thus these *pariṣads* according to Manu¹² were in some respects like the judicial assemblies and in other like ecclesiastical Synods as viewed by Yajñavalkya¹³ We are not going to examine here the character of the *pariṣads* as formulated by the *Dharmasāstra* *kāras* of later days We are primarily concerned here with the aims and objects of the *pariṣads* organised and maintained by the *Upaniṣadic* seers

10 Mrs Manning *Ancient and Mediaeval India* Vol 1 p 81

11 Max Muller *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* 113 117

12 Manu 12 110

13 Yajñavalkya 1 9

In the *Upaniṣadic* age the *Brāhmaṇic* settlements or the *parisads* were the most important centres of learning. The *parisads* or the congregation of the learned scholars proficient in different branches of the ancient learning were the various centres of learning. The *parisads* were in fact the centres for the cultivation of learning to which the pupil went and received their instructions from the scholars gathered together there.

Thus in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹⁴ we find that Śvetaketu, the grandson of Aruna went to the *parisad* of the Pāñcālas for his education. King Pravāhana, the son of Jivala was the member of that *parisad* of scholars which he attended every day. In one of the meetings of this academy Śvetaketu could not answer any of the questions put to him by king Pravāhana which ultimately made him think that his education so far received is not adequate and complete as it should be. Śvetaketu went back to his father and reported about the insufficiency of the latter's teaching. The *parisad* was essentially an academy of versatile scholars which was organised with the object of giving instruction of advanced type of those students who sought truth and higher knowledge and were not satisfied with the education received during the period of studentship. So we find persons from the stage of householder going to these academies of scholars to quench their thirst for knowledge.

Debates and Discussion :

Side by side with the *parisads* debating circles were organised where the students got ample opportunity to improve their knowledge by mutual discussion on higher problems of life and religion through instruction of renowned specialists.

From the *Chāndogya*¹⁵ we learn that Śilaka, the son of Śālāvatya, Caikitāyana of the Dālbhya family and Pravāhana,

14 B.U., 6-21, Śvetaketurha vā Āruneyah pañcālānām pariṣadam
śjagāma .

15 C.U., 181, tesyo kodgīthe kulalā bahhuruh, śilakah śālāvatyaś-
caikitāyano dālbhyaś, pravāhana jaivaliriti, te hocur udgīthe vāś
kulalāś sma hantodgīthe kathām vadama ||

the son of Jivala had a discussion on *Udgītha* in which the *Brāhmīns* got the opportunity to improve upon their knowledge on the subject from the *Kṣatriya* Pravāhana Jarvali who was an authority on the subject

Again in the same *Upaniṣad*¹⁶ we find that Pracīnaśala the son of Upamanyu, Satyayajna, the son of Puluṣa, Indradjyumna, the son of Bhallavi Jana the son of Śarkarakṣa and Buḍila, the son of Aśvatarāśva—these five great householders and great *Vedic* scholars having come together, held a discussion on 'What is our *Ātman*? What is *Brahman*? Thus reflecting and discussing among themselves they went to Uddālaka a renowned scholar on the subject but Uddālaka in his turn recommended to them the name of one specialist on the subject, viz king Aśvapati the son of Kekaya and he himself joined the party to have a discussion on the subject

In the *Kauṣītaki*¹⁷ we are informed that Uddālaka and his son Śvetaketu had another discussion by which both the father and the son had their knowledge further extended In the *Chandogya*¹⁸ we find that Narada an advanced student who had mastered all the arts and sciences of the time got knowledge perfected and doubts removed in a discussion with Sanatkumara In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹⁹ we find that a discussion took place between Gargya and Ajataśatru regarding the Universal Spirit It the same *Upaniṣad*²⁰ we find the noted discussion between Yājñavalkya and king Janaka, then again in the same *Upaniṣad*²¹ we learn that Yājñavalkya taught his learned wife, Maitreyī by discussion the various points regarding the *Self* From these it

16. C.U. 5.11.1 *pracīnaśala upamanyavaḥ satya yajñah puluṣaḥ
indradjyumno bhallaveyaḥ janah śarkarakṣyah buḍila aśvatarāśvīt
te hyete mahāśala n akāśatṛiḥ sametya mīmāṃsam cakruḥ ko na
āt na kim brahmet*

17. *Kauṣītaki* 1.1

18. C.U. 6

19. B.U. 2.1

20. *Ibid* 4.1 to 4

21. *Ibid*, 4.5

can be easily gathered that besides the regular system of imparting instruction to the students residing in the house of the preceptor there was also the system of academic meetings for discussion on higher philosophical problems where the learned scholars from far and near gathered together and took part in the discussion for the advancement of knowledge, they also imparted instruction to those advanced students to extend the frontiers of knowledge. There was also the system of academic meetings for purposes of philosophical discussions among advanced scholars wandering through the country to quench their insatiable thirst for knowledge and of the teachers who were able to solve the problem of their inquiry. It was in these learned discourses of fluctuating bodies of moving scholars that the truth about the *Ātman*, the Absolute Universal spirit, was thoroughly thrashed out. In the course of these discourses the knowledge acquired in the *gurukula* was tested through the ordeal of criticism and as a result the inquirer could reach the goal of ever effulgent truth.

• Conferences :

In the *Upaniṣads* we find another type of institution that developed for the cultivation and promotion of learning at so early a period of *Vedic* civilization. This institution is known as conference which was occasionally summoned by the kings who were great patrons of learning in those days. The *pariṣads* or the academies were the local bodies organised at different centres for the spread of education while the conferences were of national character to which the scholars, philosophers, psychologists and *ṛṣis* of the country representing various schools of thought were invited. They gathered together to exchange their views and thereby extended the frontiers of knowledge. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*²² we find an illustrious example of one such

22. B.U.3 8-1, 2.

atha ha vācakanavyuvāca, brāhmanā bhagavantah, hanta, aham imam dvau praśnau prakṣyāmi ; tau cenme vakṣyati, na vai jatu yuṣmākamimam kaścid brahmodayam jeteti prccha gārgīti.

sā hovāca : aham vai tvā yājñavalkya, yathā kāśyo śa valdeho vā ugra putrah Ujṣyam dhanuradhiṣyam kṛtvā dvau bānavantau sapatna ativyādhiṇau haste kṛtvāupottīṣhet evamevāham tvā dvābhyām praśnābhyāmunopasthām tau me brāhīti, prccha, gārgīti.

congress of the sages, thinkers and philosophers. Janaka, the king of Videha once performed a sacrifice to which he invited all the learned scholars of the Kurupañcāla country. The king made a declaration that he would make a special gift of one thousand cows with gold weighing ten *padas* attached to the horns of each cow to the greatest of the vedic scholars assembled there. A great tournament of debate was held with Yājñavalkya on one side and many sages on the other side. Yājñavalkya's superiority of knowledge was challenged by seven representative scholars of the age who put a series of questions to Yājñavalkya asking him to explain a large variety of points regarding the ritual, regarding the soul, the gods, good and bad deeds, etc. Yājñavalkya came out victorious from this intellectual contest in Janaka's court when he was able to give to each and every question a fitting reply and gained for himself a country-wide reputation for the versatile character of his learning and wisdom. Thus learned debates amongst erudite scholars took place in the midst of the sacrificial solemnities at the courts of the kings to which people from all quarters flocked to witness the interesting debating contests concerning the *Ultimate Reality*, the Highest Truth—the attainment of which is the supreme goal of human life. We can easily judge the standard of the debates from the questions put to Yājñavalkya by his opponents. Thus we find that the famous women scholar Gārgī, one of the interlocutors of Yājñavalkya, declares "Venerable *Brāhman*, with your permission I shall ask him two questions. If he will answer these questions of mine, then none of you can ever defeat him in expounding *Brahman*. Then Gārgī says, to Yājñavalkya. As an heroic youth from the Kāśi or the Videha might rise up against you, having strung his unstrung bow and having taken in his hand two deadly arrows even so, O Yājñavalkya, do I face you with two questions? Answer me these." Similarly other opponents also such as Uśasta, Kahola, etc., put question after question to which Yājñavalkya gave suitable answers and came out victorious in the national debate organised along with the conference at the royal court of Janaka.

In the *Chândogya*²³ we find a reference to another assembly or conference at the court of the king Pravāhana Jaivali to which Śvetaketu went for getting more information about the subject of study.

Another type of seats of learning was the campus of sacrifice where the learned *Brāhmins* assembled together and made discussion on several aspects of the ritualistic rites. From the instance referred to above we can guess that the *Brāhmin* boy Śvetaketu entered into the sacrificial place of king Pravāhana for receiving his education. The places celebrated for sacrifices were regarded as the renowned places for receiving instruction. The sacrificial places were regarded as one of the seats of learning since the days of *Brāhmanas*, and as such these places were the meeting ground of the distinguished scholars to establish their intellectual position. In the *Brhadāranyaka* and *Chândogya* such discussions were termed as *Brahmodya*. In the *Chândogya* we find that Uṣasti Cākrāyana challenged the priests in such a sacrifice to explain the nature of their deities and on their silence did so himself.²⁴

Royal Courts As Seats Of Learning

We shall now turn to another centre of learning which played no less an important part for the spread of education. These were the royal courts, where scholars proficient in different branches of learning assembled and discussed the various problems concerning life and death, God and soul, and arrived at some definite conclusion, and thus some definite school of thought developed in the courts of famous kings. The royal courts were the centres of culture and learning and the distinguished scholars were invited, honoured and venerated. In fact the courts of the enlightened kings were the principal seats of learning in those days where learned priests were retained and engaged for the performance of sacrifices and

23 C.U. 5.3. Śvetaketuḥ hārumeyaḥ pañcālānam samīlameyāya, tam ha pravāhano jalyaliruvāca, kumāro anu tvaṣiṣat pīṭeti. anuḥi, bhagava it

24. C.U., 1-10 11

also for the cultivation and promotion of learning in the country

Thus the urge for acquiring spiritual knowledge became so keen in the country that the philosophical speculations and discourses were carried out not only in the hermitage of the sages but also in the palaces of the enlightened kings. It is in all probability that some of the *Brāhmanas* and *Upaniṣads* which have come down to us might be the product of some such school of the priest grown up in the royal court under the patronage of the enlightened monarch.

Further, on many a great occasion men of learning came from distant parts of the country and engaged themselves not only on the discussion of the ritualistic matters, but also on subjects concerning the human mind, the destination of the soul after death, the future world and all other metaphysical, theological and other problems, and lastly, on the nature of that Universal spirit who is manifested in all the objects of the world.

In the *Upaniṣad* we find kings like Janaka of Videha, Aśvapati of the Kekayas, Ajātaśatru of Kāśī and Prāvahana Jaivali of Pāñcala who were the leaders of thought and renowned patrons of learning, to whom even the *Brāhmin* students went to receive instruction in the special branch of learning of which they were the custodians. The patronage of learning by Janaka has gone to such an extent that it made his contemporary Ajātaśatru²⁵ King of Kāśī acknowledged in disappointment that he did not find any scholar in the country whom he could possibly patronise, for all the scholars were running to the court of Janaka and adorning his court. Nevertheless, the court of Ajātaśatru king of Kāśī was adorned by the renowned scholar, the proud Balāki Gārgya whose fame

25 B U. 2.11 *dypta vālākīrṇānūcano gārgya āso, sa hovāca ajātaśatrum kāśyam, brahma te bravūṣīti ss hovāca ajātaśatruḥ sahasrametasyām vāci dadmaḥ janakao janaka itī vai jand dhāvanīti*

spread throughout the entire land of the Videhas and Kurup-añcālas. The king received him cordially and also honoured him with suitable gifts and a great discussion concerning the nature of the Self took place between them.

The court of king Janaka of Videha was another great centre of learning of the day. Janaka himself was vastly learned and many a great scholar of the land came and stayed at his court and took part in the debates and discourses held there occasionally. Indeed the king attracted to his court a vast concourse of learned men by his performance of sacrifice of which the notable accompaniment was the discourses and disputations of learned men on religious and philosophical topics. Yājñavalkya, the first and greatest of philosophical thinkers in the ancient days was the presiding personality of the debate that took place at Janaka's court. We have the names of the scholars who took part in that debate, viz., Aśvala, Jāratkāṇva Ārtabhāga, Bhuju Lāhyāyani, Uṣasta Cākṛāyana, Kahola Kauṣitakeya, Gārgī Vācakanvi.

The court of king Pravāhana Jaivali of the Pañcālas was another famous centre of learning and culture in the Upaniṣadic period. King Pravāhana Jaivali was himself a renowned scholar and his reputation and scholarship attracted to his court many learned people of the day. Śvetaketu Āruneya and his father, Śilaka Śālāvatya, and Caikitāyana Dālbhya were the most prominent ones among those who came to his court for higher learning and advanced studies.

Similarly we find that the court of king Aśvapati Kaikeya was another important seat of such learning where scholars of the land gathered together and engaged themselves for the dissemination of knowledge. Famous scholars like Uddālaka, Prācināśāla, Satyayajña, Indradyumna, Jana and Buḍila were associated with his court.

The reputation of the court of king Aśvapati Kaikeya spread far and wide, and scholars from distant places were also attracted to it for higher studies. King Aśvapati Kaikeya was

himself a learned scholar and a great patron of learning We are informed that there was no ignorant man in his kingdom ²⁶

Let us now turn to another seat of learning which played the greatest role in the speculative period of the *Vedic* age These were the hermitages of the far famed sages or the forest Universities, of erudite scholars to which the learned *Brāhmanas* retired in their old age for further advancement of knowledge or union with the *Ultimate Reality* These *Brahmanas* collected students round them and engaged themselves in the discussion of higher problems and consequently much of the boldest speculations and mature wisdom radiated from these Sylvan seats of learning Max Muller rightly remarks that *Upaniṣads* may represent to us the outcome of 'Sittings' or 'gatherings' which took place under the shelter of mighty trees in the forests, where old sages and their disciples met together and poured out what they had gathered during days and nights spent in quite solitude and meditation When we speak of forest, we must not think of a wilderness In India the forest near the village was like a happy retreat, cool and silent, with flowers and birds, with bowers and huts Think what their life must have been in these forests with few cares and fewer ambitions.²⁷

The remark of Rabindranath Tagore is worth quoting in this connection "A most wonderful things that we notice in India is that there the forest, not the town, is the fountain head of civilisation Wherever in India its earliest and most wonderful manifestations are noticed, we find that there men have not come into so close a contact as to be rolled or pushed into a compact body or mass or whole There trees and plants, rivers and lakes, had an ample opportunity to life in close relationship with men In these forests though there was human society, there was enough of open space or aloofness, there was no jostling Still this aloofness did not produce an inertness in

26 CU 5 11 5

*na me steno janapade na kadāryo na madyapah
nānāśi śāgnīrnavāyānna svairi svairi kutah*

27 Max Muller *The Vedānta Philosophy* Calcutta Sus I Gupta,
(Ind a) Ltd pp 14 15

the Indian mind ; on the other hand it rendered it all the brighter. It is the forest that has nurtured the great ancient sages of India, the Vedic and the Buddhistic. Not only the Vedic *r̥sis* but Lord Buddha also preached in many woods of India. The royal palace had no room for him, it was the forest that took him into its lap. The current of civilisation that flowed from the forest inundated the whole of India.²⁸

The ancient Hindus who valued learning and knowledge more than anything else in this world cultivated them in these hermitages—the living centres of learning. Most of the profound and exalted thoughts of humanity in the understanding of *Ultimate Reality* originated and developed in these Sylvan seats of learning. The hermitage of the sages formed as it were a sort of axis round which has moved most human speculation for thousands of years in ancient India. "The essence of that Ideal" observes Annie Beasant "is not the forest as such but the being in close touch with Nature ; to let her harmonies permeate the consciousness and her calm soothe the restlessness of the mind. Hence it was the forest which best suited the type and the object of the instruction in the days which evolved *r̥sis*; instruction which aimed at profound rather than at swift and alert thought ; which cared not for lucid exposition by the teacher, but presented to the pupil, a Kernel of truth in a hard shell, which he must crack unassisted with his own strong teeth if he would enjoy the kernel ; if he could not break the shell, he could go without the fruit, instruction which thought less of an accumulation of facts poured out into the pupil's memory than of the drawing out in him the faculty which could discover the truth, hidden beneath a mass of irrelevancies; of such fruitful study the Hindu Āśrama in the forest is the symbol."²⁹

28. *Visva bhārati Quarterly* April, 1924, p. 64.

29. Annie Beasant. *Indian Ideals*, Calcutta : University of Calcutta, 1925 ; *Kamala Lectures* 1925, pp 26-27.

Educational Psychology In The Upanisads

So far we have discussed the educational system prevalent in the *Upaniṣadic* age for imparting instruction to those who earnestly desired to have it. We have also observed how the *Upaniṣadic* teachers endeavoured to make their students useful members of the society and to establish a healthy social order for the preservation and furtherance of the cause of learning in the society and how the ancient educators turned their attention to the development of intellectual climate conducive to cultural pursuit. It is also interesting to note that they did not overlook the impact of psychology in the scheme of their educational structure rather, along with their metaphysical speculation they developed side by side some principles of psychology as well. When we intend to say something about any system of education we cannot totally ignore the question of psychology for it is an established fact that any system of education worth its name rests upon some psychological principles no matter how much they are scientifically accurate and sound. Further, it is interesting to note that the sages of hoary antiquity were conversant with the fundamentals of psychology and they developed some of its principles which proved to be accurate and strikingly modern in its outlook. The ancient thinkers anticipated some of the modern theories of educational psychology though there was no experimentation as in modern times. It is our common knowledge that in those

days love of learning was a matter of universal interest among the upper classes of the society, particularly among the *Brāhmins*. They considered it to be their religious duty to study the *Vedas* and to keep the light of learning ever burning to dispel nescience and attain the knowledge of the *self*. In order to achieve this end they were required to undergo a rigorous course of discipline to prepare their minds for the abstinence from all sorts of sensual impulses, to regulate their habits and to inculcate certain attitudes for virtues and wisdom. The regulations laid down for the students otherwise known as *Brahmacārins* have been given in detail in the text books of *Dharmaśāstra* of later days.

The teachers of the *Upaniṣads* helped the young students to acquire creative abilities, thereby enabling them to adjust themselves to social environment effectively, and this could be done, they considered, not by any other means but the evolution of the psychic. The educational system succeeded in establishing the relationship between man and man. The teachers of the *Upaniṣads* were fully aware of the psychological reactions that took place in both physical and spiritual outlook of the pupil at the early ages of their lives. The psychological change leads to spiritual change. They noticed the change and formulated certain steps to make a slow but sure progress till the body and mind are completely transformed in a way conducive to build up their character and personality. The ancient educators were conscious of psychological reactions that might affect the minds of the youth when they passed from boyhood to adolescence in the form of passion and temptation. They paid sufficient attention to the rational controlling of premature awakening of sexual inclination in the young and laid great stress on the environmental influence. Therefore, as soon as the mind began to develop, the child was sent from his home to an environment which could not breed sexual ideas in his mind and where there was little room for the evil thoughts to generate. On the contrary he could breathe there freely moral healthy atmosphere leading to unfolding of spiritual life which the educator prized more than anything else. The tran-

quillity of the environment of the hermit school, the peace that reigned there, and the purity and orderly life of its indwellers were stimulating to the favourable development of a healthy and pure life in the student. Like Rousseau they did not believe in the theory of withdrawal of the child from society and tradition to allow them to grow up in natural freedom.

The *Upaniṣadic* teachers put great emphasis on the mental discipline of the students in their schools which existed primarily as cultural influence. The teacher of the *Mundaka*¹ says that weakness, negligence, falsehood, indulgence of senses are to be purged as a course of disciplinary manner before one desires to pursue for Higher knowledge in life. The cleansing of oneself is difficult because of the inherited tendencies. The old habits are to be controlled, and changed and are to be replaced by new ones. It has been said that without austerity there can be no achievement of knowledge par excellence or perfection of works.² The teacher realised that physical strength should precede the spiritual strength; physical strength is the basis of building up the spiritual strength.

"So essential was this virtue of continence", remarks Venkateswara³, "that Brahmacharya came to denote both continence and discipleship. All our texts agree that discipline is more important than study. Agni granted Gaya the power to know the *Vedas* without study, simply as the result of his austerity, chastity, observances, vows and the grace of the *Gurus*". *Brahmacarya* is the essential preliminary stage through which every student must pass to prepare for higher spirituality. The importance of *brahmacharya* is fully realised by the ancient educators when the character of the students are still in the

1. M U, 3-1-5, *satyena labhyaṣ topasā hyeṣa ātmā
samyag-jñānena brahmacharyena nityam*

3 2 4, *nāḥām ātma bala hīnena labhyaḥ*

2. Maitrī, 4-3, '*nātapaskasyātmajñāne'dhīgomaḥ karma siddhir veti*'

3. S V. Venkateswar, *Indian Culture through the Ages*, Vol I, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1928, pp 138 9.

making when the power of temptation is great and when the power of obstruction in the way is no less significant.

In the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*⁴ the teacher clearly states that the control of mind is essential for the cultivation of knowledge. When one is said to have controlled his mind (which is primary) the control of other sense organs becomes self-evident so says the *Upaniṣad*

*Parāñci khāni vyatīnat svayambhūh
tasmūt parāñ paśyati nāntarātmān
kaścid dhīrah pratyagātmānamaikṣad
avṛttacakṣuramṛtatvamicchān*

'God created the sense organs so as to go out. Hence, a man sees only outward objects without turning his eyes inward to the self. A rare wiseman (*dhīrah*) however, seeking immortality, turning his eyes inward saw the *ātman* in the inmost recess of 'himself'.

Here the teacher points out that for spiritual wisdom one is to withdraw his attention from the world and put his senses under full control. He should turn his eyes inward to attain unalloyed bliss in life.

Vidyāranya Svāmin in his *Pañcadāsī*⁵ has enumerated the means of mind control as

*taccintanam tatkathanam anyonyam tatpravodhanam
etadekaparatvañ-ca brahmābhyāsam vidur budhāh*

Always contemplate about, speaking about it, conveying it to each other, being intent on it only is termed by the wise to be the mark of *Brahmābhyāsa*.

This means that without diverting the attention to any other thing one should carefully listen to the teaching of the *Upaniṣads* when taught by a competent teacher and their

4. *Kaṭha*, 2 1-1.

5 *Pañcadāsī*—*Tṛpti* dīpaḥ, 105.

meaning should be meditated upon, the same should be expounded to others, which will lead to mutual enlightenment. No other thought of contrary nature should come to the mind and there must be a continuous flow of akin ideas. Such mental process known as *nididhyāsana* will lead one to final emancipation. By adopting this process one should strive with concentration to achieve one's ultimate goal in life.

Thus the ancient educators, with a psychological insight organised a thorough training in self-control amongst the students by introducing the institution of *brahmacharya* during the period of their adolescence when the sex and the similar instinct were manifest in them. By following the rules relating to *brahmacharya* the students were able to lead a purer and more self-controlled life which helped them in shaping their character and habits.

Again, in the residential schools which were absolutely free from any artificiality and completely dominated by moral virtue, the students by undergoing a course of discipline were able to develop their minds and to make their bodies fit to perform the duties that were obligatory to them. Further, they learnt to control their passions and temper and by taking active part in the sacrificial rites of the teacher, they received the training in self-abnegation, endurance, loyalty and devotion which had a psychological effect in the subsequent stages of their lives outside the academy.

The educators of the *Upaniṣadic* age spared no pains in training the will of their disciples during their stay with them. The preceptors endeavoured to satisfy the growing inquisitiveness of the young learners by supplying more and more information and items of knowledge. In the *Chāndogya*⁶ we find that the son asked the father-cum teacher to enlighten him with still more facts and the father consented and began to elucidate the fact to quench his thirst for further information. It is a common psychological truth that the teacher should help and encourage in developing the mental aptitudes of the young learners which are so natural with them at this stage of their lives.

6 C.U. 6.8.7, *bhūya eva mā bhagavān vijñāpayatu itī tathā saumya, itī hovāca*

The teacher further recognised that the mental faculty remains dormant in human beings in their infancy and begins to develop gradually with the development of the body. The power of the mind which remains latent in childhood begins to manifest itself in adolescence. It has been pointed out in the *Chândogya*⁷ that in infant stage, the mind remains undeveloped "Just like infant whose mind is not yet developed but living with the breath, speaking with the organ of speech seeing with the eyes, and hearing with the ears."

The Hindu thinkers considered the mental faculty of the human being to be inborn that develops steadily with the physical growth of the child and reaches its maturity at adolescence. So the child having attained the stage of youth will not only grow in bulk, but also in intelligence. They also realised that, as the body is built up by suitable physical exercises so the mind can be improved by some mental exercises when rightly selected. Further, they held the view that the human being could not develop his mind beyond the limit of the capacity with which he is born. It is, therefore, the task of psychology and of education to make an endeavour to develop the natural powers in each individual in a harmonious way so as to enable him to attain the desired goal of human life.

The seers of the *Upaniṣads* realised that intellect is not the only means of knowledge but there are also other faculties latent in man which when developed can lead to a higher knowledge.

*dṛśyate pragraṇayā buddhyā
sūkṣmayā sūkṣma-darśibhiḥ*⁸

He can however be seen by those who possess a subtle vision with (the aid) of a subtle and keen understanding.

The *Brahman*⁹ is to be sought, known and realised progressively on any or each of the successive levels of His manifestation. Thus the teacher of the *Maitrī*¹⁰ declared

7. C U., 5-1 11. *Yathā bālā amāṇasā prāṇatā prāṇa, vidanto vācā
pariyantīścakṣuṣā śṛṇvantīś śrotreḥ aśṛṇam illi*"

8. *Kaṭha*, 1 3 12.

9. B U 4 5 7

10. *Maitrī*, 4-4.

'vidyayā tapasā cintayā copalabhyate brahma'

Brahman is to be apprehended by *vidyā*, by austerity, by meditation.

'A resolute attempt' observes Pandit¹¹ must be made to change the direction of the senses and the energies behind them; the body must be trained to become more and more conscious inward than outward, the life energy discouraged from its unchecked flow to outgoing activities and the mind and emotions freed from their mechanical preoccupations and turned and centred round the soul. The eye must be turned inward and only those movements which help this orientation of consciousness must be cultivated, the others being gradually eliminated.

Man is to make use of the stock that he has acquired from the past. They believed that man could not increase the inherent capacity for immediate use until he could add by his action rightly pursued in this life, something to the inherent stock. Like Locke, the Hindus did not consider the child's mind as a *tabula rasa*; or, as a piece of blank sheet of paper waiting to be inscribed on but believed in the innate ideas good or bad, derived as the result of experience in previous lives.¹² They did not entertain the view of Rousseau who says that man are born stupid. Even if a man is born stupid it is because of his error committed in his previous life. Thus the Hindus with the help of the doctrine of *Karma*—explain the different abilities displayed by different individuals. Thus the *Upanisadic* teacher like a true psychologist paid individual attention to each of his disciple to develop his mental faculties according to his abilities and aptitude. Never-the-less they recognised the innate capacities or potentialities of the children

11. M P. Pandit—*The Upanishads*, Madras: Genesh & Co, 1968, p. 38

12. B U., 4-4 5, "Yathākārī yāthācārī tathā bhavati, sādhu-kārī sādhu bhavati pāpākārī pāpo bhavati, punyaḥ punyaḥ karmaṇā bhavati papah pāpeṇa".

and believed that they could not develop in him which did not exist potentially in them. Further, they also recognised the value of a suitable environment viz., the *brahmacaryāśrama* which is consciously designed to mould the life of an individual in a disciplined way and which unconsciously tends to shape his habits, belief and behaviour.

Heredity and Environment

Thus the educators of the *Upaniṣadic* age took into consideration the importance of hereditary and environmental influence in the scheme of their education—a matter of controversy among the educators, both ancient and modern. The Hindu thinkers held that the human beings are born with mental capacity and faculties pre-determined and they cannot be developed beyond the limit of the capacity with which he is endowed with. Thus in respect of the efficacy of environment we see from the story in the *Chāndogya*¹³ where the *rkāṣa* king Virocana went to *Brahmaloka* for *brahmajñāna* and was taught by *Brahma* Himself, yet he did not realise the *ātman* as his mind was not endowed with the capacity to grasp the same. This shows the inherent capacity of the person, not the place of instruction, is the efficient means to acquire real education. The great educationists and psychologists of modern age like Herbert and Locke are of the opinion that it is not heredity or nature but environment or nurture that determines the fate of man. Man is born with an empty mind bereft of any impression like his naked body at the time of birth. It is the education which we receive and the environment in which we are born which are responsible for the formation of our character and the development of our capacities.

An ideal environment is essential for the development of the mental capacities while a poor environment can mar the essential features of the intellectual capacities. In the *Chāndogya*¹⁴ we find that Satyakāma was accepted as a student

13 C.U., 8-7-4.

14. C.U., 4-4-5.

on the ground of his mental traits which were the product of a good heritage. Conduct indicates the parentage of a man just as his speech the land of his birth.

It is the environment which helps in the development of the social intelligence of a man, the capacity which cannot develop either in a backward environment or in isolation.

The *Vedas* were studied in a family endowed with high native ability and not otherwise, and in the *gurukulas* due attention was paid to the proper development of the mind and the body as also the attitude. The education whether imparted either in a family or in the *gurukulas* was based on the physical, emotional and mental growth of the young educand.

Thus the educator of the ancient India took into consideration the innate tendencies of the individuals and the far-reaching effect of the external influences in the education of the students for their allround development. The teachers tried to stimulate the intelligence of the students with both internal and external influences to help the young aspirants in achieving the desired goal of life.

Psychological Basis Of The Curriculum

The curriculum followed in the *gurukala* was psychologically sound and planned in a manner so as to fit in the scheme of the mental growth of the young student. The *Upanisadic* teachers realised that the faculties of the child should be cultivated from the very early stage of his life. From the varied nature of the curriculum, comprising both religious and secular subjects, followed in the hermit school as can be seen from the *Chāndogya*¹⁵ which includes among others the three *Vēdas*, eighteen sciences, etc., it has been made absolutely clear that the teachers of the *Upaniṣads* were fully aware of the fact that to confine one's study to a particular branch of knowledge in which one was anxious to attain proficiency was not always the best way either to develop the mental faculties or to.

stimulate imagination of the pupil. A perfect knowledge of the world is considered to be necessary for spiritual attainment.¹⁶

In the *Mundakopanisad* we find that the teacher expressed the need of studying both *aparā* and *parāvidyā*. To get a comprehensive knowledge of the *parā-vidyā* one is to go through the course of *aparā-vidyā* which consists of the vocational knowledges and those of sciences and arts. People born in the society hold to work for its stability and progress. Thus finishing the study of *aparā-vidyā* first the students were allowed to enter into the realm of *parā-vidyā* step by step to attain the unalloyed bliss in life.

It is however evident that the same curriculum was not universally followed everywhere; it varied from place to place. The variation was made to suit the local conditions. The *Upanisadic* educator maintained carefully a balance between the curriculum of studies and the physical, mental and spiritual fitness of the recipient of education which started at home with parents as teacher.

Psychological Approach in the Method of Teaching

The methods of instruction were confined to the training of the will of the students in three different ways, viz.,

- (i) oral instruction or recitation
- (ii) sacred environment and
- (iii) the daily religious performances

The principal method, however, was learning the text by heart and the pupils liked it most out of their natural liking for rhythmical recitation. In fact, the education was started with the recitation of the *gāyatrī* to stimulate mental strivings and activities. The text is explained and the pupils were taught to think, understand, and ask questions to get new and more lights and to remove the doubts arising out of the discussions. The students were given the opportunity to make observation,

experimentation and discrimination so that they might turn out as complete men with the capacity of original thinking. From the teaching imparted by the father to his son in *Bṛgu Valli* of the *Taittirīya* it can be observed that the teacher wanted to stimulate the imagination, reasoning and judgement of the students.

'The old *Vedic* teacher', observes Venkateswara, 'was at least in the *Vedāntic* period no victim of a Faculty Psychology. He did not regard the pupil's brain as a *tabula rasa* in which facts were stored or ideas instilled. He had come to look on the advanced brain as a veritable dynamo which needed guidance for the exercise of its natural reactions, and improved with every such exercise. Self education was regarded as the best and highest kind of education.'¹⁷ The teacher in his teaching process, was mentally alert to adjust his teaching to the mental equipment of the student to produce the desired effect. If the instruction failed in the first instance to produce the desired effect, the teacher repeated the instruction again and again, Ācārya Śaṅkara the great teacher of the world stressed this point in his *Upadeśa sāhasrī* as '*Parikṣitāya bruṇāt punah punah yāvat grahanam dṛdhābhavati*'

That the importance of repetition to ensure the effectiveness of teaching upon the minds of the students was realised by the teacher, is evident from the *Chāndogya*¹⁸ where we find that Aruni instructed Śvetaketu the importance of *Tattvamasi* repeatedly for seven times to impress his instruction upon the green mind of the young pupil. The method of repetition in the process of teaching is also supported by Kapila, the author of the *Sāṃkhya-Sūtra*, Goutama and Badarāyana, the celebrated authors of the *Nyāya-Sūtra* and the *Brahmasūtra* respectively.

Thus it is evident that the process of education in ancient India was based on a knowledge of the psychology of

17 S V. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture Through the Ages*, Vol. 1 p. 93
18. C U. 6 8 7, 6 11 3, 6-12 3, 6 13 3, 6 15 3, 6 16 3 vide *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* 4 3, *Nyāya sūtra*, 2 2 29 and *Brahmasūtra* 4 1 1.

human nature. In the process we notice that the student not only repeated the instruction of his teacher but also imitated him. In fact, intelligent imitation played an important role in the education of the pupil in learning the scripture.

In the absence of any written document it was but natural the teachers of ancient India had to solely rely upon speech—the medium of instruction being absolutely oral. The students were required to imitate to what the teachers uttered so that they might not falter in any manner. Not only that, the students imitated their way of living, habits and manners as a living ideal before them to achieve the same goal like their teachers. Even the modern educators recognise the importance of imitation in the process of learning. So remarks Nunn the renowned educationist, “The connection between imitation and ‘originality’ has much importance for education. Teachers of a modern tendency sometimes discourage imitation on the ground that it ‘cramps self-expression’. This is a mistake. The most original minds find themselves only in playing the sedulous ape to others who have gone before them along the same path of Self-assertion. In his earlier works we cannot distinguish even the voice of Shakespeare from the voice of his contemporaries. Imitation is, in fact, but the first stage in the creation of individuality, and the richer the scope for imitation the richer the developed individuality will be.”¹⁹

It can also be observed that it is not only the teachers who were active in imparting instruction till it becomes effective but the students also were equally attentive to receive the same from the teachers. The importance of attention in the process of learning was fully realised. Attention depends on the training of the mind for fixing it upon some specific object and without the proper training of the mind proper attention cannot be achieved. In the *Chāndogya*²⁰ we find that the mind is at the root of all actions, mental and physical. Again, it has been said

19. Sir Percy Nunn, *Education—its data and first principle*, 3rd ed., London : Edward Arnold & Co., 1949, p. 157.

20. C.U. 7-14 1 ; 7-14-2.

in the same *Upaniṣad* that the mind functions through the will which urges thinking and speaking power of the mind. Will had been recognised as the modification of mind or for a particular functioning of the internal organ, the function which consists in determining and discriminating what should be done and what should not be done, it is only when a subject has been duly discriminated and determined upon there comes reflection first and then the desire to do.

Reflection or '*manana*' is important in grasping the import of the teaching of the preceptor. Mere listening (*śravaṇa*) to the instruction of the preceptor cannot be effective without reflection. This is evident from the account of the student life of Indra and Virocana as given in the eighth chapter of the *Chāndogya*²¹. Even though there was the same delivery of instruction from Prajapati, the preceptor, Virocana, out of the two pupils misconceived the teaching due to the absence of reflection. Hence reflection is necessary on what is instructed by the preceptor. It is the source of higher knowledge. It is the process by which one can rise from sensuous to the super sensuous plane. Meditation and reflection are necessary and important in the unfoldment of spiritual consciousness. It has been said in the *Chāndogya*²² that man is a creature of reflection, whatever he reflects upon in this life he becomes the same hereafter, therefore he should reflect upon *Brahman*. Again in the same *Upaniṣad*²³ we find the process of meditation on the syllable *Om* which has been shown in different ways to ensure its understanding firmly in the minds of the young learners.

Psychological Aspect of Memory And Attention

The teachers of the *Upaniṣads* laid great stress on the faculty of memory. Like the modern psychologist they believed that the matter impressed upon the mind daily at a stated hour is remembered well and by recognition of this fact they introduced in their system that the text be recited at regular intervals.

21 C.U., 87 & 8

22 C.U., 3141 & 2 B.U. 561

23 C.U., 1111, 151

to produce a greater effect on the minds of the students. Prof. James, the celebrated psychologist, commends the practice and efficacy of morning and evening prayers among the Hindus. Not only does it help to train the boy in the right moral conduct, but also to stimulate his preconscious thought. It has a wholesome effect on the physical constitution. This same practice was probably at the bottom of the thoughtfulness of the Hindus, and the sacred nature of the whole learning influenced many minds to take to literary pursuits.²⁴ Memory played a very vital role in the scheme of *Vedic* education as art of writing was unknown and everything had to be committed to memory.

The Hindu thinkers do not admit that there is any line of demarcation between the conscious and preconscious brain activity nor do they admit that a small part of the brain is in conscious activity. They hold that the power of the mind affects the other faculties of the individual as by walking a man improves his general health though incidentally walking may tend to develop his legs more than any other parts of his body.

Memory was recognised to be source of knowledge and it was as it were the store-house of learning, and it played an important role in the mental life of an individual. Whatever they learnt, they learnt it thoroughly and were able to carry it in their minds; thus they were able to reproduce any part of any scripture whenever necessary. In fact, they were able to carry their learning with them wherever they might go and could serve the society as a moving library. The method of teaching was so intensive that the students retained in their mind whatever they learnt, and thus quality was aimed at rather than the quantity. The student not only understood the text thoroughly, but their reasoning power was also developed and by virtue of the reasoning power they could take up the study of any other subject easily. They believed in the improvement of memory by what is called in modern psychology drilling. They believed in overlearning by repetition which is an acknowledged method in modern times as well.

24 V^o Bokil, *A History of Education in Ancient India*, Vol 1, p.284.

The *Upaniṣadic* teacher realised that the memory played an important role not only in the field of education but also in our day to day life as a social being. In the *Chāndogya*²⁵ it has been said, "Therefore, even when there would assemble many persons, if they had no memory, they could not hear anyone, they could not think, they could not know; if they had memory, they could hear, they could think they could know. It is by memory that one knows his son, and it is by memory that one knows his cattle."

Thus it can be seen that memory is essential not merely to education but also to the practical activities of life, for memory of the past events serves as a model for tackling the future events without difficulty. It is through the faculty of memory that we can know things, the objects of our experience. The things which are not remembered are as good as non-existent and hence they cannot perform the function of a really existing thing.

The ancient educators fully realised the value of memory in the intellectual life of a man specially when there was no facility to go through any written document. It should, however, be noted that blind memory work amounting to cramming was discarded and discouraged by the teacher. The *Upaniṣadic* teachers laid stress on *śravaṇa*²⁶, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* for acquisition of knowledge. From this it can easily be guessed that the teachers did not put emphasis on memory at the cost of intelligence. No doubt they cultivated the power of memory but they did not sacrifice intelligence at the altar of blind memory work. They tried to stimulate in the minds of the students both interest and intelligence to make their education sound and perfect.

It can be seen from the *Chāndogya*²⁷ that understanding (*Vijñāna*) is more important in grasping the meaning of the

25. C U., 7 13 1.

26. B U., 2 4 5, 4 5 6 "atmā idāṃ drashtavyāḥ śrotavyāḥ mantavyāḥ nididhyāstavyāḥ" The ātma should be seen, should be heard about, reflected on and meditated upon

27. C. Ū, 7-7.

Vedas, the *Itihāsa*, the *Purāṇas* and other branches of learning, sacred or secular.

Pestalozzi²⁸, the celebrated psychologist who wanted to psychologize education put emphasis on understanding rather than the memory and held that all education should begin with perception, he further held that the development of the physical power is necessary for the development of the mind, and the aim of education should be fitness for life, preparation for independent action. Like the Hindus, he declared "everything that is imperfect in the germ will be crippled in its growth, in the outward development of its parts. This is as true of the products of your mind, as of products of your garden."²⁹

In this connection the observation made by An Anglo-saxon Mother³⁰ is worth quoting "Oral methods have always played a most important part in Hindu education, and are employed far more than books as a means of imparting knowledge, the result of which is that, without being literate, the Hindu is often much better educated than the Western observer, accustomed to consider illiteracy as ignorance, can possibly imagine. It may be noted that many eminent Western writers have emphasized the importance of training, the understanding in preference to acquiring mere arudition. Montaigne, for example, gives his opinion strongly that judgement is of more importance than reading, and that learning is of no use if understanding be not with it. The poet Royalists, who in the seventeenth century had such a brilliant reputation as educationist in France, made a point of learning books as far as possible, and laid great stress upon conversation as a means of developing the mental faculties. Locke's dictum was : Instruction is but the least part of education. . That which every

28. J.H. Pestalozzi, "*How Gertrude Teaches her children*" translated by L.E. Holland and F.C. Turner, Swan Sonnenschein, 1907. Appendix : "The Method", p 199

29 *Ibid*, p 159

30 An Anglo-saxon Mother, *Hindu Mind Training*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917, pp 78.

gentleman desires for his son is contained in these four things—Virtue, Wisdom, Breeding, and Learning”, a list in which we note that learning comes last. Rousseau declared that “too much reading serves only to make presumptuous ignoramuses”. In this, in all probability unconsciously, these western educationists followed the Hindu method. The Hindus believed that if the understanding is cultivated well then all other faculties will naturally be improved along with it. Further, they believed that the understanding would generate imagination and feeling in the minds of the students and by these they would form the habit of thinking without any strain, thereby they would acquire the reasoning faculty which will continue throughout their life as a natural consequence.

The sages of the *Upanisads* fully realised the importance of imagination in the process of education. Our knowledge of the internal world is gained not merely by the senses but by the sense perception and imagination.³¹ The activity of the senses becomes fruitful only with the help of imagination. Imagination is the lasting cognition of things in our mind gained through sensory organ.

The importance of imagination was felt by the teacher specially in connection with the method of teaching. The *Upanisadic* teachers resorted to profuse use of similes and story telling to stimulate the imagination of the pupil as a means of effective teaching. In the *Brahmasutra*³² it has been said that the stories which do not form the part of *Pariplavas* (the stories which the sacrificer with the members of his family are expected to hear at intervals of the horse sacrifice which lasts for a year are called *Pariplavas*) are intended to introduce the *vidyas*. The stories are used to attract imagination of the students, and thereby they will be more attentive to the teaching in hand. The *Upanisadic* teachers who taught their students *upāsana*—the religious meditation, considered the role of imagination, to be immerse in forming the image of the object of worship.

31 M U 3 1 5

32 *Brahmasūtra* 3 4 23

It is not possible within the limited scope of our study to discuss the various types and forms of *upāsanā* in detail as prescribed in the *Upaniṣads*. But the fact remains true that the *Upaniṣadic* teachers emphasised the utility of *upāsanā* in their system of education. *Upāsanā* is a process of continuous concentration of the mind on a particular idea, conception or word prescribed by the scripture without permitting intrusion of any thought dissonant or alien to it which can ultimately lead to *vidyā*, *darśana* or *vijñāna*. *Upāsanā* is a mental act and it must be directed towards an object which will bring about results which are as good as liberation itself. *Upāsanā* purifies the sense organs which in turn become illuminative of the true nature of the reality. *Upāsanā* has got some definite substratum as their object and thereby it becomes easier to achieve success in it. It is perhaps for this reason Śaṅkarācārya wants to emphasize that *savikalpaka* form of meditation is more useful for the realisation of *Brahman*. All the activities of man including meditation were regulated by religious rules and as a matter of fact the religious bindings had some effect on the intellect and free thinking of the people in the society. The *Upaniṣadic* sages realised that meditation could help in uprooting the evil impulses of the human mind, and in transforming the mind itself. It could keep the interior untouched by any undesirable elements and brings about internal freedom and happiness to the individual and the society as well. According to the Hindus the real happiness of the individual and the society rests on the peace of mind and the perfection of the interior rather than in the sharpness of intellect and the exuberance of the exterior. They could thus enjoy that kind of happiness both individual and social. The combination of the two was the aim of their education of which they could boast in view of its practicability and perfection.

That the *Upaniṣadic* sages along with their metaphysical speculations, developed certain principles of psychology is evident from the following discussion. They considered that the body²³

is the city of *Brahman* *Brahman* is *Ātman* It is the psychic principle It is the inner self in man

The individual self has three different characters, namely, the physical, the psychical and the ethical The embodied soul born in this world has a three fold body, namely, the gross (*sthūla*), the subtle (*sūkṣma*) and the causal (*lāṛana*)

The gross body of the self is composed of five physical elements viz, the earth water, fire³⁴, air and ether and has got nine³⁵ gates open, namely, two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, anus, genital organ, and two more closed, namely, navel and the *brahmarandhira* or *brahmaorifice* at the top of the skull The individual self has got five *koṣas* or sheaths The *Taittirīya*³⁶ describes the five sheaths of the individual self by the successive analytical steps

The bodily self or the gross body is nourished by food and therefore, is described as the self's *annamaya koṣa* or food sheath Here the self is identified with the body and its organs. But they took no time to outgrow this view and realised that above this bodily sheath there is within it the vital sheath *prāṇamaya koṣa* The vital self is dependent on vital breath The vital forces constitute its parts and animate the body Passing through this stage also they realised that within the vital sheath there is the mental sheath—*manomaya koṣa* The mental self is dependent on *manas* Volitions constitute the mental sheath and fulfil the selfish ends Higher than the mental sheath there is within it the intellectual sheath—*Vijñānamaya koṣa* The intellectual self is dependent on the intellect Intellectual knowledge which is discriminative and can bring about the distinction between subject and object constitute the intellectual sheath Higher than the intellectual sheath there is within it the blissful sheath *ānandamaya koṣa* Supreme bliss constitutes the blissful sheath and it is a state of being subject objectless transcendental consciousness In fact *ananda* does not constitute a sheath of the individual self But it constitutes the

34 *Kaṣha* 51

35 *SU* 38

36 *TU* 215

very essence of the self. This is an unique contribution of the *Upaniṣadic* teaching that *ānanda* or in other words love, is the ultimate reality of the universe at which they arrived at by successive steps of analysis of the constitution of the universe.

It can, therefore, be said that to realise *Brahman* one has to pass through the first four sheaths into the fifth. The seers of the *Upaniṣads* have attached more importance to the heart than the head. They regarded the heart to be the seat of breath and the mind.

The sages recognised four states³⁷ of the individual soul, namely, the waking, the dream, the deep sleep and the fourth stage called *turiya*.

The *Māndūkya Upaniṣad*³⁸ though it speaks of the four stages of the soul is mainly concerned with the *turiya* state where human consciousness freed from all the modifications attains a state of pristine purity. The process of arriving at such a state is considered by this *Upaniṣad* in its four-fold aspect.

The first condition of the individual soul is the waking state of outward moving consciousness. The individual soul in the waking condition is called the '*vaiśva*' which knows and enjoys the external objects. The characteristic of the waking state the *jāgrata* is *āpti* or attainment. The waking state is the normal consciousness of man in which impelled by certain motives he makes his choices and plans for achievement. The impelling power of action is originated from memory which resides in the sub-conscious level of the mind. Thus in the waking state there are the conscious and the sub-conscious layers of the mind of which the former supplies the pattern of behaviour and the later the impelling power of action. From the waking state the teacher now passes on to the second condition of the individual soul which is called the dream state of inner moving consciousness. The individual soul in the state of dream is called *taijasa*

37. C.U., 6-8 1 : B.U., 2 1 17.

38. M.U., 2 7.

or the shining light which knows and enjoys subtle internal objects or cognitions. The characteristic of the dream state is *utkarṣa* or upsurge as *āpti* or attainment is that of the waking state. The dream being inner moving consciousness is not affected by the external objects but by internal factors. It is a state of inner modification. It is a state which may not have any relationship with objective reality but stands as real as an objective experience so long the dream lasts. The experiences of dream state come to a man when he is in deep moments of absorption. In the dream state there is the absorption rising out of choicelessness and hence it is called '*tayasa*—coming as bright and shining'.

Now the teacher of the *Upaniṣad* speaks about the third state of consciousness which is of deep sleep of silent consciousness, where there is no desire—where there is no beholding even of dreams. It is a state of oneness and designated as '*prājñā*' or the wise one who frees himself from the movement of outward or inward consciousness, and reverts to his pristine state of bliss. It is called '*prajñānaghana*' a state of homogeneous mass of consciousness and bliss. It does not apprehend external objects or internal cognition.

Regarding the state of deep sleep or *suṣupti* the teacher of the *Upaniṣad* says that it is characterised by *āpti* on final end. It is indeed a state where man is approaching the realm of truth, where movements come to an end. The consciousness of man, with the cessation of all movements only can visualise the absolute nature of the thing. In the silence of dreamless deep sleep he almost realises his real self.

The state in which the truth reveals itself is what the *Māṇḍūkya* calls the fourth state—the *turiya* state where all things exist in their original nature. When man arrives at his original state then alone he is truly integrated. It is a state of super consciousness where the perception of the *Ātman* comes in, where the mind is freed from the pulls of the past and the anticipation of the future. The individual soul in the *turiya* condition is called the *Ātman* which is one universal consciousness (*ekatmapratyaśasara*) which knows neither gross objects

nor internal cognition which is not a mass of consciousness which is neither consciousness (*prajñā*) nor non-consciousness (*aprajñā*). It is one non-dual, non-empirical transcendental consciousness. The *Ātman* is the universal consciousness. Thus the teacher of the *Māndūkyaopaniṣad* speaks that the man who desires to enjoy the eternal bliss in union with the *Brahman* must cultivate his reason by thinking of the real nature of the external world and his activities therein, secure inner freedom and lead a pure and chaste life. The German philosopher and educationist Froebel³⁹ says—"To be wise it the highest aim of man...By education the divine essence of man should be unfolded, brought out, lifted into consciousness, and man himself raised into free conscious obedience to the divine principle that lives in him and to a free representation of this principle in his life....."

³⁹ Friedrich Froebel, *The Education of Man*, translated by W.N. Hallmann, Appleton, 1912, pp. 47

Education And Society

Education : Its Impact on Society

In the *Upaniṣadic* age there was not a high percentage of educated people in the society but there is no denying the fact that the masses came under the educational and cultural influences of the enlightened people belonging to three upper classes. Since the earliest times there were some social institutions like rites and sacrificial ceremonies in which the people engaged themselves for years bound them together and afforded an opportunity to live a corporate life and to render some useful service to society. The existence of such organisations as *sabhā* and *saṁiti* clearly brought to the mind of the people the idea of the duties and social obligations of citizenship.

The social organisation was evolved to preserve and protect the heritage—cultural and spiritual, to adapting it to the changing social conditions and to transmit the same to the coming generation. The spirit of self-sacrifice and the sense of sincere service on the part of the members of the society made the social organisation well founded and thus enabled it to last for centuries unhindered.

In the absence of some amount of general education among the people it would be difficult to account for such a well established social organisation.

The educational structure was formulated in consonance with the general aim of Aryan culture which was clearly distinguished from literacy. "In the arrangements for the propagation of culture", observes Venkateswara "among the masses, the aim was to bring to the door of the humblest, though illiterate, the highest product of the human mind and heart rather than to enable him to read, write or cipher for himself."¹

They had a pattern of education essentially based on the question of ultimate value or end of human life which they called *mokṣa* or liberation meaning freedom from ignorance and suffering and attainment of eternal bliss.

Spiritualistic Values in Education

They considered sufferings as discredit that darken the human soul and struggled for freedom from it. Sufferance is caused due to the lack of true knowledge of the real nature of the self. One who can realise the true nature of the self can attain freedom from bondage. It has been recognised as the eternal value and all other ends were regarded as subservient to this supreme value.

Nevertheless, the peculiar excellence of Indian culture consists in the combination and co-ordination of traits, in the organisation of a hierarchy of ends (*caturvarga*) to attain the final goal of human life termed *paramapurusaṛtha* or *mokṣa* by following the three other desiderata or aims of human life viz., *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* which form a gradation of values; and in the purposeful systematization and intelligent directions of all resources to these progressive ends of humanity.²

In the ninth *anuvāka* of the *Taittirīya*³ we are told that people to live as a complete man in the society cannot ignore any side;—truth, justice, study, teaching, meditation, austerity, love, begetting of children, enjoyment, hospitality, sacrifice and

1. S.V. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture Through the Ages*, Vol 1, London: Longman, Green & Co, 1928, p 24.

2. *Ibid*, pp.22 23.

3. T.U, 1-9.

renunciation—all should be taken into consideration. But above all, they should be true seekers of truth and genuine seekers of knowledge, and amidst all human obligations and social duties they must be able to succeed in attaining the ultimate goal of human life by removing the obstacle and overcoming the bondage of matter.

It can, therefore, be reasonably presumed that knowledge was not regarded as the end of education, but as the means of attaining the ultimate value—the right attitude in life.

In the *Upaniṣadic* society the people did never put so much emphasis on any other values as they did on the ultimate value. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*⁴ we find Maitreyī who put the question to her husband Yājñavalkya "If this entire earth filled with wealth were mine, would I become immortal by that?" Yājñavalkya sharply retorts, "No" just as is the life of means, so will your life be. Wealth can never produce immortality." Thus Maitreyī in her turn preferred knowledge of the immortal self in lieu of trash and transitory wealth offered to her by her husband the reputed sage Yājñavalkya. Through the teaching of that great teacher Yājñavalkya imparted to his wife Maitreyī we learn that wealth and property can give us worldly comforts but cannot lead us to the state of immortality which transcending sorrow, suffering and death leads one to eternal bliss.

Similarly, in the *Kaṣhopaniṣad*⁵ we come across the same idea where we find that Naciketas meekly declines the infinite riches with which the god of death, tempts him, and is praying to the latter to reveal the nature of the next world and self. Thus says Naciketas, "All these things of enjoyment last till tomorrow. They wear out the strength of all the senses of man." Further he says that in this world man cannot be satisfied even by amassing immense wealth⁶, '*na vittena tarpanyo manuṣyaḥ*'. Again in the same *Upaniṣad* we are told that people do not

4 B U 2-4-2 *sā hovāca Maitreyī yannu ma ityam bhagoh sarvā prthivī vittena pūrṇā syāt katham tenamṣtā syām iti na iti hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ yatitvopa karanvatām jīvitaṁ tatitvā te jīvitaṁ syād amṛtatvasya tu nāstī vileneti*

5 *Kaṣha* 11 26

6 *Ibid*, 11 27

assign any value to the accumulation of wealth. It cannot give him the real and lasting happiness. It cannot bring immortality to him. The way of liberation does not appeal to a foolish man, who is deluded by the illusions of wealth? (*na sāmparāyaṇ pratibhāti bālāṁ pramādyantaṁ vīttamohena mūḍham*).

As the people in the society do not put any value on wealth so also they do not accept desire or pleasure (*preyas*) as the final goal of human life. They discard the things of worldly value as they are mortal and material and cannot lead us to everlasting happiness. Thus in the *Kaṣhopaniṣad* we find Yama revealing to Naciketas—the young seeker of truth of invulnerable integrity who cannot be distracted from his persistent inquiry by any temptation of objects of worldly value as follows

‘The good (*śreyas*) and the pleasant (*preyas*) both approach man. One who is wise examines the two meticulously and discriminates the one from the other. The wise man chooses the good in preference to the pleasant, on consideration of acquisition of worldly prosperity.’⁷

As to the question of attaining everlasting happiness through wealth, we always find the answer in the negative; wealth is considered only as the source of evil. The people do not consider wealth and pleasure to be of any intrinsic worth, but wealth and pleasures i. e., *artha* and *kāma* are not however totally rejected or denied in the scheme. Man has to maintain his life and some amount of economic security is essential to keep his body and soul together to facilitate one’s spiritual hankering. The ideal life of king Janaka is an illustration in point. He was a great king and had to shoulder the responsibility for the smooth functioning of the body politic; nevertheless, he pursued the path of self discipline and spiritual wisdom. He struck a perfect balance between worldly duties and spiritual aspirations.

7. *Ibid.* 126

8. *Ibid.* 122.

The *Upaniṣad* teacher preaches that man should not run after worldly pleasures for enjoyment cannot be the be all and end-all of man's life. Man must try to elevate himself to higher plane of thought and life, and this can be effective only through self discipline and self denial. The ideal of the society is to live well and let others live, and to have the necessities of life till through spiritual amelioration one can disentangle himself from them.

The *Upaniṣadic* seers do not ignore the desires and pleasures which form an integral part of human nature (*kāma-maya evaṃ puruṣa iti*, B U, 5 4-5) and fall into the scheme of four ends or *caturvarga* of life. They are not blind to human love and affection, instinct and emotion, desires and aptitudes but what they actually try to impress upon the people is to follow these lesser ends of life with moderation and proper control in a disciplined manner so that they may attain the desired end of their life. Says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*⁹ 'when all the desires that dwell in the heart of a man vanished, then the mortal (man) becomes immortal.'

People consider desire as the cause of rebirth, in other words, as the cause of miseries and sufferings. In the *Muṇḍaka*¹⁰ we find that 'he who longs for desire, thinking of them, is born here for the satisfaction of his desires. But in the case of him who has conquered his desires who is a perfected soul all his desires vanish away even here in this life.'

Marriage is not prohibited rather it is treated as a sacrament and is encouraged. The foundation of family is regarded as an essential condition for the healthy growth and stabilization of the society. In fact, the householder's life and fatherhood are enjoined as religious duty in the interest of the continuity of the race as the duty of studying and teaching the *Veda* is enjoined in the interest of the continuity of the *Vedic* lore and cultural heritage. Thus in the *Taittirīya*¹¹ we find that

9 B U 4 4 7 *Yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye sya hṛdīṣṛitāḥ atīṣṭa marītyo mṛto bhavati atra brahma samaśnute*

10 M Ū 3 2

11 T U, 2 2 *dearaya priyam dhanam ahṛtya prajātantum mā vjave-*
ci etsih

students are enjoined to marry for the unbroken continuity of the race and to propagate learning and teaching of the *Veda* in the society. The *Upanisadic* seers consider that through knowledge of the *Supreme Spirit* man can realise and enjoy eternal bliss; '*vidyayā amṛtam aśnute*¹²'. This is the spiritual experience which finds its expression in the *Īśāṁsyopaniṣad*.

Social Welfare and Moral Values

In ancient India the society and the life of individual are divided into classes and stages respectively and the process is usually referred to by the expression '*varṇāśramadharmā*'.

We have already seen how the life of the individual is divided into four stages viz., the student, - the householder, the forest life and the hermit.

The word *dharma* from a broad point of view is used in the sense of righteousness or moral goodness. It is due to certain measure of morality that the society in ancient India could flourish and be firmly established. In a restricted sense *dharma* is also regarded as the duty of man. So long as man is immature he may not know the duties pertaining to the station of his life and has to depend on an external authority. In the *Taittirīya*¹³ we find that the teacher advises his disciple as to what should be done in case his mind is beset with doubt in regard to the proper line of action—this advice as stated below forms a part of the convocation address—"should there be any doubt concerning any act or any doubt relating to conduct, you should conduct yourself in such matters after the manner of *brāhmins* who may be living in your neighbourhood those who are competent to judge, devoted to good deeds, who are not led by other, are not too severe but are lovers of *dharma*."

12. *Ia*, 11

13. T.Ū. 1.11.4, "atha yadi te karma vicikitsā vā vṛtta vicikitsā vā syāt ye tatra brāhmaṇāḥ sammarśinaḥ yukta ayuktāḥ alaukikā dharmā kāmāḥ syuḥ yātha te tatra varteran tathā tatra varṣeṣāḥ athāthy-
dharma kāmāḥ syuḥ yātha te teṣu varteran tathā teṣu varṣeṣāḥ

Commenting on this passage Śamkara¹⁴ observes that such course of action should not only be directed by the teachers alone, but by the fathers to their sons as well. This implies that the senior members of the society endeavour for the healthy growth of the younger generation and of the community at large. In this connection Prof. Radhakrishnan observes 'Brāhmanas competent to judge apt and devoted but not harsh lovers of virtue, for those great men go on doing their daily work, diffusing virtue as the star diffuses light and the flower perfume, without even being aware of it'.¹⁵

They are regarded as *apta* being free from four defects incidental to humanity *bhrama* (confusion or delusion) *pramāda* (carelessness) *vipralipsa* (desire to cheat) and *karanapataya* (defect of sense organs) and hence they may be safely considered as authority and proper guide to lead the younger generation.

Morality is conceived as of cardinal value for the stabilization, development of society and for the propagation of culture. The progress of any society is not possible without certain amount of moral virtue obtaining among the members constituting that society.

The *Upaniṣadic* teachers have not overlooked the importance of ethics in the training of the student for they know without an intensive ethical discipline it would not be possible for the students to preserve and develop further the culture which they inherit from their predecessors. In the *Aṣṭhōpaniṣad*¹⁶ we find

'Not he who is not free from evil conduct not he who is not tranquil not he who is bereft of concentration not he who is not of tranquil mind can obtain Him (the self) by knowledge

From this discussion it is clear that the moral virtues are considered as indispensable condition for attaining the eternal.

14 Śamkara *esa upadeśa putrād bhyah p trādnam api*

15 S. Radhakrishnan *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* pp. 105-06

16. *Kaṭha* 2.24

repose and bliss. In the *Mundaka*¹⁷ also we find corroboration of this fact.

The *Upanisadic* teachers have not elaborately discussed the principles of ethics but, nevertheless, they always expect ethical excellence on the part of their prospective students. So we find here and there the instruction on moral virtues ; for instance, in the *Taittirīya*¹⁸ we find how the teacher in his valedictory address derives home in the student's mind the efficacy of the rules of conduct, social obligation and duty to the society to which he is going to be admitted as a member shortly. The teacher says

"Let your mother be a god unto you. Let your father be worshipped as your god. Let your preceptor be revered as your god. Let your guest be honoured as your god. Perform only those acts that are above reproach and not others. Follow all that are good in your teacher's life and not others (i. e., not the teacher's demerits).

Here we see that good conduct is the *sine qua non* of spiritual and moral life. The essence of ethical virtues is expressed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*¹⁹ by three words—*dāmyata*, *datta* and *dayadhvam* which mean cultivate self-control, be generous and have compassion. Education aimed at inculcating the spirit of love and charity as a check against a spirit of isolation and self-gratification. "*Dayā*" or compassion is more than sympathy or intellectual and emotional feeling. It is dynamic love or love in practice. It lessens the suffering of others and generates a sense of fellowship. The practice of these three virtues will preserve, further and intensify the values of life and cement the bonds of community life.

Universal Brotherhood and Social Happiness

The fundamental belief which was traditionally harboured by the people in the society, was that the Supreme Self is one common thread that pervades the whole creation and as such

17. M U., 3 1-5, 3 1 8

18. T.U., 1 9 20

19. B U., 3.2 1.

this fact has paved the way for mutual understanding. All are children of that one spirit and their universal brotherhood is a common heritage. The ancient seer prays :

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah sarve santu nirāmayāḥ

Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantū mā kaścid duḥkhabhāḡ bhavet.

'May all of us become happy and healthy. May all attain the good : May none suffer'.

Here we find a lofty, noble and elevating idea of universal brotherhood. All are equal in the eyes of God. All entertain good wishes for all. All have equal rights and duties. All enjoy equal opportunity. When all are the children of the same God, whom who should hate.

Their sympathies are not limited to humanity alone but overflow to all beings (*lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu*). Let all beings of all the worlds be happy. They consider social happiness as a necessary condition for cultural growth and development ; rightly do they think that real happiness and love can flow from the central source, of Self love.

(*ātmanastu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati*—B.U., 2-4-5, 4-5-6).

The *Upaniṣadic* seers realised that social happiness should be within the reach and every member of the society. Education exerted influences on the individual for being helpful to the members of the society. People tried to establish a corporate life based on intellectual understanding. A true human relationship implies reverence to elders, friendliness towards equals and fellow-feeling towards those who are weak, miserable and physically incapacitated. It was the desire of all the individuals to bring about collective social happiness by discharging their duties for a peaceful co-existence. It has been rightly observed by Venkateswara, "Social happiness was sought to be effected by every member discharging his duty, regardless of his rights, to the community and to the social group to which he belonged by birth and breeding, by temperament and tradition, and by his adopting a policy of peace, amity, good-will and helpfulness to the rest of human kind.

The service of society was not the sacrifice but the fulfilment of self-interest properly conceived. One who feels the nobler joy of life works for the joy of work, cares not for reward, and fears not the consequences. In this joy does the pilgrim on spiritual progress fix his gaze on the ageless order of immortal nature."²⁰

Thus the social and moral values form the bedrock of this monistic spiritualism. No other arrangement is necessary to establish the social and ethical values so effectively as spiritualism upheld by the ancient seers of the *Upaniṣadic* age. Education aims at giving a full play to this spiritual power lying dormant in man as a spark of the divine and to build up a harmonious and integrated personality.

The Value of (Saṃskāra) the Religious Sacraments

The sacraments or *Saṃskāras* are meant to attain the high ideals of education and to maintain discipline in the society. These comprise the religious ceremonies intended to spiritualise an individual by purging his mind of all the lower elements and by making him more and more refined. The religious ceremonies aim at the union of mankind and communion with the Supreme Self. These are to be observed through all the stages of human life.

The Value of Social Organisation (Varna-Vyavasthā)

Citizens forming a society are like members of a single joint family where each one contributes his earning according to his ability and draws from the common pool what he needs for himself. In this system of social structure the individual is imparted the training of self-sacrifice, self-discipline, obedience and order, respect and reverence which raise the scale of social values to a high degree.

In the *Upaniṣadic* age the *Varna-Vyavasthā* of the society was based on the socialistic principle and did not assume the

20 S.V. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture through the Ages*. Vol. I, pp 34-35.

form of a rigid cast-system which is met with in the post *Vedic* age.

The division of the society into *Varnas* or classes was a natural process and each individual is given specialised training in the duties assigned to that *varna* or social group to which he belongs by birth or tradition. Each member is expected to discharge his duties regardless of his rights and to adopt a policy of peace, amity and good will towards the members of the community. The teacher enjoins upon his students "Do not be neglectful of those acts that would lead to prosperity and well-being."²¹ Each individual is responsible both for himself and the community at large. Each member is trained to cleanse his soul of desires and passions, hatred and jealousy and to inculcate such virtues as love, truth, reverence and self-sacrifice leading to perfect citizenship and spiritual amelioration. The preceptor looks after the student with love and affection and the students in their turn revere them as spiritual fathers. The value of spiritualism is emphasized and considered essential for the real co-operation between the teachers and the taught. The immature minds of the students must for the sake of the efficiency come in close contact with the mature mind of the teacher and thus both of them play equally important roles in the field of spiritualistic education.

The social organism is deliberately based on a philosophy of society and all its activities were directed to get emancipation from the world and worldly concerns. Education is a preparation not only for the life here but also for the life hereafter and is designed to perpetuate the great heritage handed down by their forefathers. The pattern of the educational organisation is such that the highest results of their educational pursuit are made accessible even to the humblest member of the social organism.

Education is so planned as to mould the life of the pupil from the moment he is conceived to the moment of his demise.

The influence of education pervades most of the departments of social life.

Domestic and social life are so arranged as to develop a sense of spirituality towards the end of life, a life of constant social service and spiritual exercise to lead finally to the absorption of the individual soul into the All-soul.

Education aims at preparing the young and the old alike for social service. Idleness or inactivity is never encouraged. Every one is required to perform his duties irrespective of his class and stage of life. No one has the right to give up his duties. In the *Chāndogya* it is eloquently expressed that the value of philosophy rests as a sustaining factor in doing social service. "When one obtains bliss, only then does one perform his duties, one who does not attain bliss, does not perform his duties."²²

It is due to the ungrudging help and charity of the fellow men that the student is able to prosecute his studies and as such it is his solemn duty to render service to the society on a reciprocal basis from the moment he enters into it.

The Religious Values

The value of the study of religion is recognised in the society and it forms an integral part of education. Religion embodies a set of ideals to be pursued for the good of the individual and welfare of the community as a whole. For example, the sacrificial rites symbolise a spirit of sacrifice and service. One is to renounce all his selfish desires to attain the blissful state of communion with the Supreme Spirit. When one can sacrifice personal aspiration and selfish interests, then alone he can devote himself to the larger interest of the society and thus the concept of universal brotherhood under the fatherhood of God is established. The religious performances bespeak daily self-discipline from morning till nightfall. It is the duty of the elders to train the youngers of their family by leading lives

22. C.U., 7 22, *Yadā vai sukhāṃ labhate atha kṛoti nāsukhāṃ Iddhva*

of austere simplicity and perfect discipline. Such lofty example of elders inculcate in the minds of youngsters pure and noble ideals that go to the making of perfect citizens and perfect seekers of truth.

Regarding the relation of education to society it has been said, 'It gives to the nation the priceless assets of learned and skilled men and women of higher character to carry on the work in every department of national life. Learned men produce literature which raises the nation in the eyes of the world and far more important, spreads knowledge over the earth, literature which ennobles and inspires not only contemporaries but generations yet unborn. Science makes discoveries which add to human knowledge, increases man's power over the forces of Nature, and if it tends only righteous paths—will preserve, uplift and strengthen human life and happiness. By education man's spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical nature can be lifted from the savage to the saint; can poverty be abolished, can society be made fraternal instead of barbarous; can crime, the fruit of ignorance, be got rid of, and international and social peace replace war and the strife of classes. Avidya is the mother of poverty, of sorrow, of misery. It is darkness which the sun of Vidyā must chase away.'²³

Thus the *Vedic* fathers of ancient India fully realising the importance of education lay so great an emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge, learning is considered to be a means to the achieving of the ideal of human life. Hence says the seer '*vidyayā sādhaṇeta*'

The aim of education is to discipline and develop the body, mind and intellect of the young aspirant and also inculcate a sense of higher values for the formation of character. The system of education is such that it can maintain and improve the spirit of the rich cultural heritage handed down through generations.

23 Annie Besant *Indian Ideals* Calcutta University of Calcutta 1925—
Kamala Lectures 1925 p 14

Passion, greed, sensuality, desire, etc. are the inherent nature of the human beings. The human nature has been classified under three *gunas* or qualities viz, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* and they are to be disciplined and controlled in order to enable us to develop our *Sattva guna*. The *Upaniṣadic* culture teaches us that we must learn self-control which means the control of both the body and mind. Wisdom lies in controlling ourselves ; this is what is called culture. Culture is the essential characteristic of the educational system and reflects certain values which are acceptable as basic approach to life. It is culture which can only bestow on us the manly virtues like self-control, self-denial, spirit of service, humility, largeness of heart, etc. 'īdyaḥ dadāti vinayam', goes the old adage. The primary objective of education is cultural rather than utilitarian and there is always an insistence on the formation of character and integration of personality so essential for the full flowering of manhood.

The system of education plays a vital role in self-guarding and strengthening these values and in providing the intellectual and moral tone to basic human values. Education aims at moulding the child and the youth into an intelligent, virtuous and disciplined citizen imbued with a moral sense to perform his onerous duties for the all-round development of the community.

The students are given to understand that they have a rich heritage of culture and of values, moral and spiritual and it is their bounden duty to imbibe them and exalt this heritage to a greater altitude.

Education of Women In The Upanisads

Since the *Rg-vedic* age, there existed some system of education for women. It is evident from the large number of educated women mentioned in the *vedic* literature. The girls along with their brothers received some sort of education under the guidance of either their father or some teachers as the family itself served as the first educational institution in ancient India. The fact that the members of a family irrespective of their sex were required to take part in *vedic* sacrifices requiring some sort of training goes to establish the same view. From this it can also be inferred that the girls were not denied the privilege of studying the *vedic* literature and performing the *vedic* sacrifice. It is true that there is neither any explicit mention of girls' education nor the existence of any separate institution for their training in the *vedic* age. But at a later stage *smṛtis* like Yama prescribes that none other than the father, uncle or brother should teach a girl 'Pita pītṛyo bhrātā vā naināmadhyāpayet paraḥ'. The recitation of the *vedic* hymns and the offering of the *vedic* sacrifice were not allowed unless one underwent the initiation ceremony (*Upanayana*) and consequently this leads to infer that in ancient India *Upanayana* or investiture with the holy thread was obligatory not only in the case of boys but in case of girls as well. The obligatory *Upanayana*

ceremony for the girls necessarily demanded of them certain amount of *vedic* and literary education for the fulfilment of its objectives Dr. Altekar¹ is of opinion that as long as *Upanayana* ritual was performed in the case of girls, and the custom of child marriage had not taken root in society, girls of well-to-do families must be receiving fairly good education" Lord Manu² also prescribes *Upanayana* as one of the obligatory *samskāras* for girls

Mention has been made of as many as twenty-six learned and scholarly women seers in the *Rg-veda* itself to whom some of the *vedic* hymns were revealed such as Romaśā (1-126-7), Ghosā (10-40 9 to 13), Viśvavārā (5-38-3), Apālā (5-3), Ambh-rnivāk (10 125), Lopāmudra (1-179) etc

In ancient times the discipline of *brahmacarya* was also required to be observed by the girls This stage of *brahmacarya* probably refers to the period of studentship of the girls preceding their married life It is mentioned in the *Rg-veda* (5-7-9) that the young maidens after completion of their education as *brahm-cārīnīs* should unite with their husbands as the rivers are merged with the oceans It is also mentioned in the same *veda* (3-55-16) that a learned daughter should be given in marriage to a learned bridegroom alone Never think of giving in marriage a daughter of very young age By resorting to *brahmacarya*, observes the *Atharva veda*, (11-5-18) the girls are given in marriage to young bridegroom, "*brahmacaryena kanyā yuvānam vindate patim*". The sense of this *mantra* is that girls were allowed to marry on completion of the period of *brahmacarya* (the vow of study) We are told by Yama one of the ancient *smṛtikara* that in very early times girls used to tie the sacred cord (symbol of initiation) to study the *vedic* lore and to recite the *sāvitrī*, the sacred prayer

purūkaple kumārīnām mounjibandhanamisyate
adhyaṇanaca vedanām sāvitrī vacanam tathā

1 Dr A S Altekar *Education in Ancient India*, 3rd ed, Banaras : Nandakushore & Bros, 1948 p 213

2 Manu, 2-66

Hārīta, one of the sages records that all the four stages of life including that of *brahmacarya* (studentship) were open to women and that both the sexes had a right to utter the *mantras*

There are ample evidences which go to show that women in ancient days enjoyed the right to utter the sacred *mantras*. In the *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra* (I-II) it is stated "*īmam mant-ram patnī paśhet vedam patnai pradaṣya vācayet*". The wife (of the sacrificer) should recite in a sacrifice this *mantra* placing the *veda* in the hand of the wife, have this *mantra* be recited by her

Govila Gṛhyasūtra (1-3) prescribes the right of women to perform the *Agnihotra* with *vedic mantras*

*Kāman gṛhyegnau patnī juhutāt prātarhomau gṛhapatnī-
gṛhya esognīrbhavaṭi iti*

The commentator on this further clarifies the point "*patnīmadyāpayet kasmāt patnījuhuyāditi vacanāt, naḥi khal-
vanadhītya śaknoti patnī hotumiti*".

The women should be taught, for without such studies they cannot perform *Agnihotra*

Again in the same *Gṛhyasūtra* (2-3) we find

*Dhruvamasi dhruvāham patikule bhūyāsmamuṣṣāsvatī
patināma gṛnhīyādātmanasā*

The wife should utter the *mantra* '*dhruvāha*' and then pray to God for ability to live in her husband's house in safety and steadfastness and thereafter utter her own name alongwith that of her husband. In the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* (9-2-1) we are told that mother should utter the *mantra* '*Sāvitrī prasūta*' etc at the time of the boy's *Cuḍākaraṇa* (tonsure ceremony)

Jaṣminī in his *Pūva Mīmāṃsā* says '*Tasyā yādulkar-
māśīrbrahmacaryamatulyatīti*' (6-1-24)

Women like men can bless with *Vedic mantras* and observe *brahmacarya*

That women not only studied *Mīmāṃsā*-philosophy but they also taught others is evident from Patañjali's *Māhābhāṣya* on Pāṇini's *sūtra* 'anupasarjanāt' (4-1-14) where it has been stated—*kāśakṛtsnīnā proktā mīmāṃsūkāśakṛtsnī kāśakṛtsnimadhīte kāśakṛtsnā brāhmaṇī* .

The Brāhmin lady who has studied the *Mīmāṃsā śāstra* written by the sage Kāśakṛtsna is called Kāśakṛtsnā.

Again under Pāṇini 'inśca' (3-3-21) it has been stated in the *Mahābhāṣya* "inścetyatrāpādāne striyāmupasaṃkhyānam kartavyam, tadantātēca yā niṣaktavyaḥ. Upetyā'dhīyate tasyā upādhyāyī upādhyāyā".

The woman approaching whom one studies is called *Upādhyāyī*.

The use of the term '*Upādhyāyā*, *Upādhyāyī*' denoting a lady who was herself a preceptor as distinguished from wives of teacher would show that their number in society could not have been negligible.

Further Pāṇini's rules regarding the formation of such terms as *Kāthī*, *Kalāpī* and *bahvrcī* referring to women being acquainted with the different *śākhās* of the *Vedas* lend support to the fact that the study of the *Vedas* was never denied to them.

Similarly under the same context in the *Mahābhāṣya* we are informed that the Brahmin lady who has studied the *Āpiśālīan* school of grammar is known as *Āpiśālā* (*Āpiśālamadhīte brāhmaṇī—āpiśālā brāhmaṇī*).

The laws of marriage prevalent in ancient India introduce us to a state of society where both the sex acted as free agents in matrimonial matters and where women were never looked upon as inferior but equal to man. In the absence of the general education of the girl it would be difficult to account for any equality that might have subsisted between husband and wife in any period of our ancient history. The story of the marriage of Sūryā (the daughter of Sūrya) shows us that both husbands

and wives fully realised the importance of the marriage sacraments

The girls of *Vedic* age were taught that marriage was not for lust, but for perfect domestic life and illustrious progeny so that the cultural life of the society might be continued for ever. Unless mothers are truly well educated the rearing of a new generation capable of bearing the responsibilities of the community can never be taught of.

In her husband's house the bride occupied an exalted position and was at the head of all domestic affairs. Her status in the father-in-law's house was commensurate with her intellectual attainment and power of management and it is here that education had to play its part. In the marriage hymn *Rg Veda* addressing the bride the bridegroom says, 'Like an empress rule over your father-in-law, rule over your mother-in-law, rule over sisters-in-law and rule over your brothers-in-law (10-85-46). Be favourite of every one. Be happy and content. Be mother of children. Manage the household affairs carefully. Happily united with your husband rule over this house till your old age (10-85-27)'. This hymn proves the high status of the wife in clear and unambiguous language.

The girl received broad based instruction regarding household affairs and enjoyed a dignified liberty. They got training in the art of house-keeping and house management and acquired requisite education to conduct themselves properly in the married life. The family system made a noteworthy contribution to the cause of civilization. The girl received domestic education. She also learnt the art of some handicrafts that sustained the society. Over and above she was taught the elements of hygiene, physiology and nutrition so that they might manage all departments of family life through intelligence, meticulous care and vigilance. She was the caterer of happiness, the abode of grace and the source of inspiration. The wives were really the better halves of the family, a successful daily companion who shared the cares and troubles and doubled the happiness and comfort.

They were helpmates in the real sense of the term who realised that the true essence of relationship between husband and wife was that of true companionship, mutual respect and reciprocation of feelings which made their conjugal life happy and peaceful as far as practicable.

The husband was her teacher and it was his responsibility to teach her the *Veda*. We meet with many a housewife to whom some hymns of the *R̥g-Veda* were ascribed. From this it can easily be inferred that marriage was never considered as an impediment to the continued progress of education of the women rather, it contributed much towards the cultural development of the community as a whole.

The women were eligible to study the *Vedic* literature and could participate in the performance of sacrifice with men. It was the prevalent custom that a married man only could perform the *Vedic* sacrifice because in every sacrifice it was compulsory that the wife must accompany the husband in the performance of rites. So says the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (5-1-6 to 10) "*avajñiyo vā eṣa yo'apatnikah*". A bachelor had no right to perform a sacrifice.

Further the said *Brāhmaṇa* records that (The) Gods do not accept the oblations offered by a bachelor "*na vai apatnikasya hastāt devā balim gṛhṇanti*". No sacrifice was considered to be completed without the active participation of wife for a wife is considered as one-half of the sacrifice "*ardho vā eṣa yajñas) a yat patnī*". Both husband and wife were required to undergo a special initiation on the occasion of sacrifice which made them competent to take active part in the procedure of sacrificial rites (*R̥g-Veda* 8-13). The obligatory function of wife's participation with her husband in the performance of sacrifice and other religious ceremonies flowed down to the ages of the *Gṛhyasūtras*. The wife was called *patnī* because of her active participation with her husband in the performance of sacrificial rites. Pāṇini's Sutra (4-1-33) '*Patyurno Yajñasam)oge*' also lends us support to this view. All these topics, viz., education of women in the vedic age, their access to *Upanayana*, *Vedic* study and sacrifice, their learning and observance of *brahmacarya*, the *brahmvādīnīs* who were

versatile scholars observing the permanent vow of *brahmacarya*, physical and military education and education in fine arts of women in the *Vedic* age, their cottage industries and professions—concerning the education of women in *Vedic* India have been discussed by Dr Jogiraj Basu in his seminar lecture delivered at Visva Bharati in 1971

Two Types of Girl Students

Early marriages were very rare in ancient India 'Majority of them' remarks Altekar 'used to get married at the age of 16-17 and only a few would prosecute their studies after that age' Girls of the former class were called *Sadyovadhū*, and of the latter *brahmayādinis*. The education of the *Sadyovadhūs* comprised the study of important *Vedic* hymns necessary for the usual prayers and Sacrifice. Music and dancing were also taught to them.³ The other type of women were called the *brahmayādinis*, teachers of the *Vedas*. Their position was recognised, clearly and distinctly—they wore the sacred thread, had the right of kindling the sacrificial fire, studied and taught the *Vedas*, and lived unmarried in their (paternal) houses.⁴ Dr Altekar, however, remarks that *brahmayādinis* used to marry after their education was over, but this observation does not find support in the *Vedic* literature. The seer Romaśa for instance, was known as *brahmayādinī*. Romaśa was the daughter of Bṛhaspati.

Harita says "*divyā dīdha stīryo brahmayādinīyah sadyovadus ca tatra brahmayādinīnam upanayana mouñjīvāndhanam vedādīya yanam śvagrhe bhikṣacārya itī Sadyovadhūnam tu upasthite vīśahe kathañcit upanayanam kṛtvā Vivāhah Kāryah*". There were two types of women, viz., *brahmayādinis* and *sadyovadhūs*. The *Brahmayādinis* were entitled to *upanayana* they tended the sacrificial fire, studied the *Vedas* and begged alms in their own

3 Dr A S Altekar *Education in Ancient India* p 203

4 Annie Besant *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life* Theosophical publishing Socy, (Banaras and London 1901) p 116

homes. The *Sadyovadhūs* were given away in marriage after a brisk ceremony of *upanayana* (investiture with the holy thread)

From this as well it can be easily inferred that the girls were also invested with the holy thread like the boys in ancient India.

The *Upaniṣadic* system of female education did not depart from the essential features of the *Rg-Vedic* age. It was more or less identical. During the *Upaniṣadic* period the pattern of education was mainly philosophical in nature. Along with men the females too diverted their attention from *Vedic* ritualism to more intricate problems of life. They began to take keen interest in the study of philosophy and this was never denied to them. It is interesting to note that the husband acted as a teacher to his wife and it is evident from dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī, the Spiritually inclined wife of the sage, in the *Bṛahadāraṇyaka*. Here we are told that on the eve of his leaving his family for retiring to the forest, Yājñavalkya wanted to make a partition of his property between his two wives, Kātyāvanī and Maitreyī. Maitreyī said "My lord, if this whole earth full of wealth belonged to me, should I be immortal". 'No', replied Yājñavalkya "thy life will be only like the life of those who have all kinds of conveniences for them, but there is no hope of immortality by the mere possession of wealth". Then Maitreyī said, "What should I do with that by which I cannot be immortal? What my venerable Sir, knoweth of immortality, tell that to me". Yājñavalkya replied, "Thou art truly dear to me so thou speakest dear words. Come, I shall instruct in Spiritual wisdom".

Then followed one of the most interesting and highly philosophical discussions about the universal self and its relation to

5 B U, 4-3-3 & 4 "Sā hī ka maitreyi yannu ma iyam, bhogah, 'anāḍ pṛthak vāstena pār ā syāt svām nu aham tenāṁśīd āho pa itī na īī hōdra Yājñavalkya, Yathānopakar-a-avatām jivitam tatī āva te jī tam svāt, amṛtatraya tu nāstī vāstereṇī"
 "Sā hōdra maitreyī yendham nāṁśīd syam kim aham tena kuryām, va tēva bhogān veda tad eva me brah m

the individual. This spiritual choice on the part of a woman and the earnest desire to use her knowledge to win immortal life clearly testifies to her sound education and mental make up. This memorable and oft quoted saying of Maitreyi⁶, observes Dr Basu, "has stirred the hearts of saints and seekers after truth down the ages. Many Western savants and Indologists including Winternitz, have praised this spiritual illumination, this spiritual quest that surged up in the hearts of women in ancient India. In her utterance we hear the cry of the human soul, which Mathew Arnold calls, 'the divine discontent'. She reminds us that material prosperity or wealth can never satisfy man's spiritual needs."⁶

In the same *Upaniṣad* we meet with another famous erudite scholar, Gārgī Vācakaṇvī who came to the court of Janaka the king of Videha, a great patron of learning to carry on discussion on subtle points of religion and philosophy in a debating bout with the veteran savant and philosopher Yajñavalkya. Gārgī asked Yajñavalkya as to what was the warp and woof of the world. Yajñavalkya answered that it is the primordial *akāśa* or 'space'. She accepted the answer but proceeded with the second inquiry. She inquired 'as to what is the warp and woof of this primordial *akāśa*'. In this way Gārgī took Yajñavalkya to the region of *Brahman*. Then again Gārgī asked 'what lay behind the region of *Brahman* itself'. At this Yajñavalkya almost chaffed her, 'Do not ask too much. Thy head shall fall off if thou inquierest again'. Gārgī stopped for a while, but stood up again and said with the remark "Venerable *brahmanas* now I shall ask him two questions. If he can answer these two questions none of you I think will then be able to defeat him in the arguments concerning *Brahman*." Yajñavalkya answered both the questions which were on *Brahman* described as limitless in Time and Space. Hearing this Gārgī praised him and desisted from questioning further. We should bear in mind that before Gārgī's debate with Yajñavalkya many scholar sages of that time such as Cakrayana, Kahola etc. challenged Yajñavalkya in debate, when every one of them was defeated they brought the famous

6 Dr J. R. Basu, *The Education of Women in Vedic India* Visvabharati Quarterly Vol 37 No 2 1971

women savant Gārgī to defeat Yājñavalkya. Gārgī could not defeat Yājñavalkya nor Yājñavalkya Gārgī ; their debate ended in a draw.

From this incident it can be said that women were given a place of honour and liberty to mix with the people freely and also to engage in debates and philosophical symposiums even in the assembly of learned scholars. Knowledge gave them the status and the power to hold their own in such matters.

'The introduction of Umā in the *Kenopaniṣad*' ; observes Venkateswara, 'is illustrative of the great regard the poet and sage had for the educative power of women, even as regards the highest metaphysical truths and their teaching.'⁷

The education of women aimed at making them balanced regulated, good and kind. This can be clearly inferred from the behaviour of the wife of Satyakāma to Upakośala whose graduation ceremony was postponed year after year by the teacher. The wife urged upon her husband to perform the ceremony of Upakośala but Satyakāma refused to do so and went away from the *āśrama* on some important work. Upakośala then resorted to fast. Thereafter, the wife of the teacher asked him why he was undertaking this fast. Upakośala replied that he was suffering from disease. The teacher's wife further inquired about the nature of his disease.

The chief lesson of girls aimed at making them affectionate mothers and intelligent nurses. Education was directed to draw out the finer qualities in them and to develop their natural virtues and latent capabilities necessary for the all round development of character and personality.

The *Bṛhādarājaka*⁸ records that parents were eager to have the birth of scholarly daughters as well and for this purpose they used to perform some rituals too.

7. S. V. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture Through the Ages*, vol. I, p. 68

8. B. U., 4-17, *atka ya icchet, dāhita me pa-dita jlyeta, sarvamayāri-yaśaśiśauśanam pūcātirā sarpaśantamainiyatamīyārau jarayitā-va*

Parents were always desirous of training their daughters to become educated and accomplished ladies in society. They fully realised that unless the mothers were truly educated the upbringing of the new generation must suffer and it would be fatal to the progress of the race

'Some lady scholars of the age' observes Altekar,⁹ 'like Sulabhā, Vadavā, Prāthīfeyī, Maitreyī and Gargī seem to have made real contribution to the advancement of knowledge for they enjoy the rare privilege of being included among the galaxy of distinguished scholars to whom a daily tribute of gratitude was to be given by a grateful posterity at the time of daily prayer'

In the *Upanisadic* age there were some women who undertook the task of teaching and their names were listed as spiritual teachers along with the male teachers who formed the chain of spiritual teachers. From this we can safely conclude that women in ancient India held an exalted and covetable position in society

The position of women in any civilization shows the stage of evolution at which that civilization has arrived. There can be no doubt as to the heights of civilization attained in ancient India¹⁰, if we judge it by the high standard of women's education and position of wives that obtained in the *Vedic* society

9 Dr A S Altekar, *Education in Ancient India* 3rd ed pp 209-210

10 Vide Annie Besant *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life* (Benaras and London Theosophical Publishing Society, 1901) p 106

with the preceptor, this fact exerted immense influence on moulding the character and developing the personality of the students during the most impressionable period of their lives. The teacher and the taught were united together by mutual understanding, confidence, affection and reverence. It was the place where the immature minds of the students came in close contact with the mature minds of the teachers. This healthy contact helped the pupils to solve their problems of life in complete co-operation and harmony. Education aimed at the unfolding and improvement of the innate faculties of the students and as such the individual attention so essential to achieve this end was duly paid by the teacher. The *Upaniṣadic* teacher realised that individual attention and close contact between the teacher and the taught were essential conditions for creating the proper intellectual equipment and for progress in culture and advancement of knowledge.

The teacher devoted to his duty imparted instruction to the student whole-heartedly without ignoring the latter's individual limitations and drawbacks in an atmosphere of love and affection. Students held the teachers in deep esteem, love and veneration. The teachers on the other hand considered them both to be the sparks of the same divine spirit, the only difference being that one was immature and the other was mature. The intellectual growth, self-confidence and self-reliance of the student can only develop in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and of cordial relationship between the teacher and the taught.

Knowledge was acquired through close personal contact of the teacher whose precepts and examples shone forth like guiding stars before the eyes of the disciples. The teacher was the embodiment of truth, learning, wisdom and affection and disseminated knowledge to the best of his abilities by great personal sacrifices and under austere discipline. Such a teacher was eager to bestow the results of his spiritual researches and the treasure house of knowledge on meritorious students without realising any fees from them. The teachers did their best for expanding the frontiers of knowledge. Their growing desire

for social welfare, order and good will was remarkable and laudable

From the facts stated above one can safely conclude that the system achieved the three major aims of education, viz ,

- (i) the acquisition of knowledge,
- (ii) the formation of character and the development of personality of the rising generation of society, and
- (iii) inculcation of social welfare and performance of religious duties

The educational system aimed not only to mould and form character but also to infuse a sense of spirituality in the minds of the young learners. The aim of education reflected the intellectual, moral and spiritual values. Purity of thought, love of truth, sense of duty, self help, humility, obedience, discipline, fellow feeling, piety, and integrity were some of the spiritual values which the teacher tried to impress upon the young learners. In fact, these are the essential qualities which ensure peace and order in society. Hence the teachers keenly felt the necessity for spiritual values in education. The student was taught to lead an integrated life and to discharge his duties towards society and the cultural heritage of the country. It is due to this state of society, that culture could thrive to such a large extent in *Vedic India*. Thus educational system was successful in its aim of the preservation of ancient cultural heritage. In other words, it may be said that the main aim of education was to prepare the students to discharge their duties usefully in four different stages of their lives or simply for their station in life.

'The surprising amount of cultural uniformity' remarks Altekar, 'that is to be seen even now over the length and breadth of India is mainly due to the successful preservation and spread of ancient culture and civilization. If there are several features common to Hindu life all over the country, contributing to Hindu unity, the credit had to be largely given to the

educational system, which has produced uniformity in the culture and outlook on the life of the Hindu community.¹ Social efficiency and social happiness were among these important achievements which the system of education of the *Upanisadic* age achieved. Teachers were able to infuse the importance and awareness of the great heritage handed down the ages into the minds of the disciples. Naturally this fact awakened in them the sense of civic responsibility to be discharged faithfully as individual members of society or as an integrated unit of the social organisation leaving no room for escapism in any form. This could be done when the organisation of the society was based on some principles which were philosophically and sociologically sound. Moreover the social behaviour was moulded by the socio religious attitude and moral virtues of the members of the society. The educational system was based on integrated courses of study which included subjects of both arts and sciences and afforded the student the necessary means to adopt a synthetic approach towards life. The method of instruction was governed by the concept of personal contact between the teachers and the student. Memory played an important role in the process of learning which was traditionally oral. But it was supplemented with detailed exposition, discussion, debates and proper elucidation and as such attention was paid to prevent unintelligent cramming. The method of teaching was primarily based on three steps, namely, (1) *śravaṇa* (listening to teachers) (2) *manana* (ratiocination of things learnt) and (3) *nididhyāsana* (meditation). The methods of teaching laid emphasis not only on how knowledge was to be acquired, but also indicated how emotions and sentiments were to be trained and developed. Repeated recital, critical reflection and reasoning were recognised methods for developing the intellect of the young learners.

People belonging to different social groups performed their duties assigned to them with due loyalty and sincerity for

1 D. A. S. Atrekar *Education in Ancient India* Banaras and Kishore and Bros. 1948 p. 249

the well-being of the society as a whole without being conscious of their individual rights. Thus they were able to live in harmony and peace and consequently extend the frontiers of knowledge. Thus they were able to establish themselves as a highly cultured nation of the world. This achievement could hardly have been possible had the educational system been unable to produce persons of outstanding personality and deep erudition in the different walks of life.

The educational system was characterised by earnest inquiry, intellectual freedom, individual attention and creative thinking. The *Upanisadic* teachers discussed with all earnestness and advocated original theories and new doctrines which society accepted gracefully. The educational system, therefore, could achieve manifold development in the different spheres of knowledge and could at the same time contribute much to the advancement of knowledge and ensure its transmission to the posterity. The system was not, however, limited to philosophical theories alone but its scope was extended to the study of other branches of secular learning as well which they considered essential for the all round development of the community as a whole. We have discussed the multifarious secular items of learning in chapter nine of this thesis.

The achievement of the educational system was manifested in the fact that it could turn out persons with sense of civic responsibility, moral virtues, self-imposed discipline, stern regard for duty and reverence for the past. This could be evidenced from their efficient living and effective membership of the society which they entered after the completion of the *Gurukula* system of education.

Another important contribution of the educational system was that it could insist upon the students to continue their studies even after the end of their course and thus it succeeded in keeping the flame of learning ever burning in the society and this fact helped in preserving the rich cultural heritage from generation to generation and in contributing much to the common treasure house of knowledge.

Relevance of the Educational system in the Context of the Presentday Society

There is no denying the fact that the *Upaniṣads* are the inexhaustible source of the cultural and spiritual heritage of India. The *Upaniṣads* are the remarkable products of the philosophical, academic and theological discussions that took place between the preceptor and the disciple in the forest schools of ancient India. The preceptors disinterested in the glamour of the world spent their lives in the study of the deeper problems of life and expounded those problems and the mysteries of the inner world to the students who approached them with a spirit of inquiry and keen thirst for knowledge, and spent years in their company as members of their household. Thus a system of education known as *gurukula* system sprang up of which the successive generations took advantage and devoted their lives for the furtherance and dissemination of knowledge. Therefore, it can be said that the *gurukula* functioned as a community of scholars who had deliberately withdrawn themselves from the humdrum of urban life so as to dedicate themselves quietly and consistently to the pursuit of truth and excellence. The values which inspired the philosophy of education in ancient India can never be over-estimated and exaggerated.

The teachings of the *Upaniṣads* are fresh even to-day as the approach to life made by the *Upaniṣadic* seers is as relevant to modern society as it was in that age of hoary antiquity.

The prodigious growth of modern science and technology has brought about a revolution in the sphere of moral and religious values, and also in the time honoured aim and object of human life. To-day science has been a dominant intellectual activity of mankind and it has been valued mainly for the advantages it has brought to them for satisfying certain human needs and desires even by overcoming obstacles and exploiting the natural resources of various kinds. Technological achievements has upset the traditional way of living and thinking. The march of science and technology which has made tremendous material progress has caused the stagnation of age-old moral virtues and

spiritual values. Further, the new discoveries of science have posed a challenge to all the traditional values, beliefs and practices in the religious, spiritual, moral, educational and other fields of our life. Man is putting greater emphasis on physical strength, material prosperity and gratification of the self. Our youths are living to-day in an atmosphere of vacuum of values. Education is not something that can take place or flourish in a vacuum. Our ancient values which are eternal are unfortunately regarded to-day as outdated. Our students do not develop respect and love for the ideals upheld by our ancient teachers which embrace all aspects of life even to-day. They look for new ideals. They are athirst for fresh ideas. Their minds are charged with noble ambition and hope, at this most impressionable age and pliant state of mind which may be called the age of idealism. They with their newly awakened emotions question the validity of the existing system of values. They are eager for unified and integrated wisdom. They want to live for what they believe to be true, good and beautiful. But unfortunately, our present day educational system has not yet been able to place before them any fresh ideals. It has failed to inculcate the right values in the younger generation. This bewilders the exploring youth and as a result they become restless and engage themselves in anti-social behaviour and destructive activities. This is because of their resentment against authorities who fail to rise to the occasion and give expression to their creative faculties, and also to satisfy the fundamental need of the spiritual and moral ideals to guide them in their life's journey in the complex world to-day.

To-day we have discarded the age-old tradition of the family system which was of vital importance in training our youths in self-discipline and self-sacrifice, respect and reverence for elders, resulting in our failure to infuse in them our social values automatically conserved by our ancestors. Further, parents are not making any genuine effort to understand their children's problem or to adjust them to a situation that is emerging anew in the society around. In the ancient society we find the father speaking to his son, "verily my dear, from our family there is no one who is not learned and is a Brahmin by

birth²¹

Lack of close or personal contact between the teacher and the taught is another factor which has aggravated the discontentment and unruly element among the students. The most unfortunate part of the thing is that the teacher himself is not content with his own prospect, he craves for more and more and thinks more of wordly gains and material amenities than of students' welfare. A teacher who himself is subject to discontentment can not inspire the students nor exert wholesome influence on them or the society. He sadly fails to form the character and mould the life of students in a well directed manner. The teaching of moral and spiritual values is not enough we must also look into the quality of the teacher. Joid in his book *About Education* says 'The teacher trains the minds, assists manners and shapes the morals of the members of the community at their most impressionable age. He helps to form first conceptions of good and bad, social and anti social, beautiful and ugly. He is in some part responsible for our outlook on politics.

We should therefore exercise great care in selecting competent persons as teachers who are devoted to teaching and imbued with a sense of love and affection for the students. For on their quality depends the future of the younger generation. For an effective teacher-student relation is not only important for an effective instruction in the class room but it has also its significance in bringing the imperceptible influence which the teacher as living example exerts on the life of the students. Further, the unwholesome influences of the political parties over the students cannot be underestimated. The statements of leaders from public platform instead of rectifying the maladies rather enhance the cause of disillusionment and discontentment among the student community to day. Political leaders have no love for students, they only make catspaw of them to serve their selfish ends. A great deal of improvement is possible only when the responsibility for moulding the character and behaviour of our youths is definitely undertaken by those who are in

positions of authority, influence and power in society.

It can, therefore, be said that the home, school and the community should co-operate and work unitedly in developing spiritual values in our youths. If the spiritual side of education is developed they will understand the value of human life and realise the divine purpose of love and universal brotherhood through emotional and social integration. It is through such training that they will realise the value of simple living and high thinking by leading a life dedicated to service and sacrifice. "Any school worthy of the name", says Smith, "will have the spiritual life of its own which makes of it more than an assemblage of teachers, pupils and buildings. It will have an atmosphere which is felt to be different from other environments the moment one steps into it."³ Quillen says "Education is the changing of behaviour in some desirable directions, in which the family, church, peer groups, mass media, school and community—all serve important educational functions."⁴

An eminent thinker of modern India, Rajagopalachari says, "At no time was there in our country such serious heartsearching as at the present moment agitates all circles, high and low, as to the need for reinforcing the sense of values, moral and spiritual. Never was it more acutely realised that no effort to improve conditions through laws or through administrative direction can bear fruit unless the moral sense of the intelligentsia is quickened. . . . we have, it is perfectly clear, to make the quickening of the moral sense a definite part of the educational system even though it may seem to be a slow approach to the problem, "And this, not by including in the curricula of schools and colleges, lectures and studies on the subject of morality but by organising such activities and such discipline as will infuse in the minds of our young men and women reverence for truth and good and an automatic revulsion from falsehood

3 Huston Smith—*The Purposes of Higher Education* (New York : Harper and Bros., 1955) p 189

4 James Quillen—*Priorities in the Educational Program Teachers College Record*, vol 57, March, 1946, pp 405.

and evil."

The Love of power is creating suspicion hatred and jealousy among the peoples of the world The conception of love, sympathy, fellow feeling universal brotherhood and other fine qualities of human life are fast disappearing from society The educated man is pestered with the problem Is there any relevancy in following the wise counsel of the sages of old? Are they not antiquated and irrelevant in the context of the society of to day?

Let us first of all turn our attention to the values religious and spiritual the eternal values of life which teacher after teacher of the *Upanisadic* age preached and impressed upon the students It will not be out of place to mention that to day we take pride in making great progress in the field of education We feel elated to find that the educational institutions in the different branches of learning are being multiplied day by day

We boast that new methods of imparting instruction arrived at in the light of new researches in the field of education are being introduced to suit modern conditions and develop the aptitude of the students for different occupations Attempts are being made to encourage the students to take to physical culture sports and social welfare The facilities and opportunities to improve and develop their condition position and status in the world of education are provided in an increasing manner

But unfortunately, we are witnessing to day that no other section of the community is so restless and so indisciplined as the community of the students The student unrest and indiscipline have been manifested in various forms such as strikes violent demonstrations non violent protests hunger strikes clashes with the authorities and the police and so on Whenever a student trouble sparks off in a campus of any educational institution it not only paralyses the educational activities of that particular

institution but it also adversely affects society as a whole—the student community not being an isolated phenomenon but forming an integral part of society

The leaders of society and teachers are set thin selves to think about the way of these agitations. Is it due to the fact that we are dissociating ourselves from the traditional values—moral and spiritual? Could we attribute the state of affairs to our failure to impart moral and spiritual instructions in our educational system to tone up the youths as it was the part and parcel in our ancient system? We must admit that it is largely due to our failure to inculcate those time honoured values in our educational institutions

It is, of course, not possible to introduce the *gurukula* system of the forest universities of the Vedic India in its exact form and structure because of the march of science and technology which have made tremendous material progress and caused the stagnation of moral virtues and spiritual values. But it is also equally true that the disappearance of the age-old *gurukula* system does not necessarily mean the disappearance of the ideals on which it was founded and for which it flourished in unbroken continuity for centuries together. Ideals can always be cherished and upheld and as a matter of fact, even in the scientific and technological civilization of to day one unhesitatingly feels and realises the relevance of these traditional ideals for ensuring mental, intellectual and spiritual freedom. It is, of course, true that the material achievements for which we should strive, can not be totally sacrificed at the altar of spiritual development but must rather be assessed in terms of their influence on the latter. This will help us in developing certain attitudes which will encourage simplicity and train us to limit our wants and desires.

Moreover, we feel the urgent need of reviving the spirit of *gurukula* in our schools and if it can materialise we can convert our educational institutions into real centres of learning where the mutual relation between the teachers and the taught may flourish in an atmosphere of love, confidence, peace and harmony congenial to the growth of an academic community engaged in

the advancement of knowledge and the achievement of the highest ideals of education

We, however, feel that it is not necessary that our seats of higher learning to day should be located, far away from the din and bustle of city life, in the midst of forests like the *gurukulas* of the *Upaniṣadic* age, the basic concept being still the same as that of an institution dedicated to the undisturbed pursuit of knowledge and truth. Nevertheless, we are to make an attempt to impress upon the students to inculcate the traditional values. Our attempt for inculcation of values will be futile if teachers fail to imbibe the values and be able to reflect them in the behaviour pattern of our students. This can be made possible only through the genuine effort of the teachers. But how many of our teachers of to day and tomorrow will earnestly take up this job is a matter of serious concern.

If we can impress upon the students to imbibe the great ideals taught in the *gurukula* system such as *Matṛ devo bhava*, *Pitṛ devo bhava*, *Ācārya devo bhava* etc (T U, 1-11 2) We can create an atmosphere congenial to learning and teaching. The ideal is that knowledge is to be pursued in a spirit of reverence and devotion to the father of the race and to the teacher, the real architect of the nation, to whom we are indebted for the cultural and spiritual heritage. Regarding the influence of *gurukula* in the formation of character and development of personality, inculcation of wholesome discipline of the body and the mind of the student has its relevance and appropriateness even to-day if we want to build up a healthy society for peaceful co existence and welfare state. It goes without saying that the whole educational system to-day cannot be reconstructed on the model of a *gurukula* with its sole objective. It is also a fact that any attempt to reconstruct the entire educational system on the line of *gurukula* or as community of teachers and students which has deliberately withdrawn itself from life in order to dedicate itself to the pursuit of truth and excellence will contribute to its failure.

The *Upaniṣadic* teachers defined education as—‘*vidyā vimokṣāya vibhāṣa kevalā*’, ‘*sa vidyā yā vimuktaye*’ ‘*vidyayā amṛtamasnute*’. Education is that which can lead us to the solution of our problems or difficulties. Education results in the final emancipation from the mundane thralldom. Human life is full of problems, and education helps us to solve them throughout our life’s journey. Education they considered to be a life-long process and no one should deviate from study. So says the *Taittirīya*—‘*sādhya-jāt ma pramaditavyam*’.

Education, therefore, does not end in the four walls of the class room, where alone the problems are tackled. The real school of learning is the school of life where men are confronted daily with newer problems and stern realities of life. The real instrument of instructions are the men and women around them. The real teacher is the experience which they gather and the success of education depends on the manner in which they face the problems of life. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* winds up its instruction with the injunction to the parting students as to how to conduct themselves when they come in contact with some problems in life or new influences. These messages of education are ever new and eternal, and as such are relevant for all times and climes.

The highest aim of *Upaniṣadic* education was man making, character building and the realisation of the *Supreme Spirit*. The ancient seers laid great emphasis on the spiritual enlightenment of the individual which consists in gaining a vision of the *self*. They directed their attention towards the realisation of the *self* which is of the nature of all-embracing love. By visualising the all-embracing spirit they could enjoy freedom from fear and desire which make a man slave to his physical environment and material comfort. This state of fearlessness is called liberation. Education aims at this liberation.

The crying need of the hour is an ‘integral education’ to meet the challenge of the present-day situation. Regarding the ‘integral education’ Sri Aurobindo says, “India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity entrapped in mind and body, a conscious manifestation in

Nature of the universal self and spirit Always she has distinguished and cultivated in him a mental, an intellectual, an ethical, dynamic and practical, an aesthetic and hedonistic a vital and physical being but all these have been as powers of a soul that manifests through them and grows with their growth and yet they are not all the soul, because at the summit of its ascent it arises to something greater than them all, into a spiritual being, and it is in this that she has found the supreme manifestation of the soul of man and his ultimate divine manhood his *paramārtha* and highest *puruṣārtha* that the only true education will be that which will be an instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation That is the principle on which we must build It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation soul and its *dharma* and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being "6

The nearer we go to our goal of perfection we shall be able to perceive the truth

The truth lies in the *Upaniṣadic* statement
Yunā syāt sādhu yunadhyaṣakah, aśiṣṭho
dṛdhiṣṭho baliṣṭhah tasyeyam pṛthivī
sarvā vīttasya pūrṇā syāt (T U , 2 8-1)

The young man must be a *sadhu* The word *sādhu* should be taken in the sense of one who is disciplined It is disciplined mental and physical which can lead man from the 'unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality So the teacher says

6 Sri Aurobindo *A Preface on National Education in Arya* 1921 reprinted in *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education* 2nd ed., 1960, pp 12-13

asto ma sad gamaya,
tamaso ma jyotir gamaya,
mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya (B U , 1 3 28)

Education is connected with immortality. By the term '*junā asīṣṭhah*' they (the teacher) impressed upon the students that they should be full of hopes and dreams and never face frustration in life. By '*valiṣṭhah*' the teacher urged upon the students to be physically vigorous, mentally alert, and intellectually sound. Without these they are no better than animals. These are essentials to success through all stages of life. By '*bala*' they mean not only the development of muscles but also the development of brain power, to study the problem and solve it and not to create problems. The real *bala* is *atma bala*. So they declare '*nayamatma balahūnena labhyah*' (M U , 3 2 4). Students were always encouraged to cultivate physical strength as a basic need to achieve the individual goal and for doing what is good and noble to the society. The spiritual life does not necessarily mean the neglect of physical well being. The *Upanisadic* education aims at the development of both the mind and the body of the students thus enabling them to concentrate on such activities as attention, retention, observation and experimentation. The student achieving these three fold aspects of education, '*Sadhu aśiṣṭhah, baliṣṭhah*' and '*Dṛdhiṣṭhah*', will find this world full of wealth and prosperity—'*īśyayam pṛthivī sarva vīśaya purnā syat*'.

This ideal has its appropriateness and importance for all ages especially for the modern age.

The value of *Samskāras* or sacraments which the *Upanisadic* teachers accepted for refining the habits and attitudes, body and mind of the students have still its relevance if properly applied and adjusted to the modern condition of the society. Similarly, the value of flexible class system or *Varna Vyavastha* (not rigid caste system) based on socialistic principles may be revived so as to enable each individual to receive his training in special branches of learning and occupation. Each individual by his specialised knowledge and skill can contribute his mite towards the production of wealth for the nation and thereby can

raise the standard of living. Thus the social organisation of the *Upanisadic* seers has also some relevance in the present day society which is bitterly experiencing economic distress, inequality and unemployment.

The system of education aimed at developing individual morality. Each individual was trained up to feel responsible for himself and the society as well. Each individual was required to inculcate virtues such as truthfulness, fearlessness, self sacrifice, self control, tolerance, forgiveness, fellow feeling, compassion, devotion to God and elders and dedication to noble causes etc. Each individual became an embodiment of such virtues. Such a person cannot discriminate between man and man. The broad based universal outlook of the educational system had a whole some impact on and irresistible appeal to the modern man of to-day as well.

The educational system was viewed further as the process of integrations. We find the seers proclaiming—'*Ātmanam yena sarvatra samam paśyanti mānaḥ*'. Man should look upon all others about him as he would upon himself and behave towards them as he would towards his own self.

The oft' quoted *śāstric* injunction —

ātmanah pratikulani pareṣāṃ na samacaret, i.e., One should not mete out towards others such misdemeritour, injury or insult which one does not desire for his own self goes far ahead of the Biblical injunction—'Love thy neighbour'.

The great secret of social happiness and peaceful co-existence lies in the cultivation of love, sympathy and unselfishness as an attitude on the part of the people on all occasions. We must refrain from all sorts of anti social activities or unsocial behaviour if we desire to live peacefully in society. 'Live and let live' should be our motto. Education should help not only in the development of the individual but also of the society in which he lives and of which he is an organic unit. It is the duty of the higher seats of learning to day to create and maintain an atmosphere which might be congenial for people to live together with

mutual understanding, trust and tolerance. It is an essential pre-condition for the promotion of learning, good will and advancement of knowledge in society. It can best be achieved when the students become partners with the teacher in the search for truth and in exploring the human intellect to push further the frontiers of knowledge. Further, it will help us in preserving what is best in our culture and in its transmission to the rising generation. This will go a long way in forming a dynamic community of the seeker of truth and excellence. The idea of partnership implies the ability to understand each other's mind which is conducive to transform the course of changes going around us in our society in a way fruitful to build up a new healthy social order with fresh ideals and ideas. Educational structure influences society just as society determines the course of education.

The study of religion formed an integral part of the educational system of the *Upaniṣadic* age. In fact, education in those days was religion-oriented. By imparting instruction in moral and religious matters the *Upaniṣadic* teachers could inculcate an integrated personality, well-developed character, self-sacrifice, self-reliance reverence to elders, sense of responsibility to self, to family, to society and to humanity at large. The teacher desired that the student should pursue certain ideals upheld by religion and tradition for the good of the individual and the welfare of the community. By performing sacrificial rites the teacher trained the students to imbibe the spirit of sacrificing all personal desire for attaining the eternal bliss. By this they could bring about order, harmony and peace in the society. The main goal of education was spiritual, viz., self-realisation. The *Upaniṣads* declare in clear and unambiguous terms that spiritual culture is both the main aim of education and also the abiding substratum of all other 'vidyās or sciences. Observes the *Mundakopanishad brahma-vidyā sarva-vidyā pratiṣṭhā. Brahma-vidyā* is the mainstay of all other branches of learning. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa upholds this truth when He, asserts in the *Bhagavad-gītā, adhyātma-vidyā vidyānum* (10-32) 'I am the *'Adhyātma-vidyā*, i.e., spiritual learning among the sciences. Thus in India, unlike in Greece and Rome, spiritual culture stood on its own legs, and all studies looked up to it for inspiration and

the Board finally resolved that "while they recognise the fundamental importance of spiritual and moral instruction in the building of character, the provision for such teaching except in so far as it can be provided in the normal course of secular instruction, should be the responsibility of the home and the community to which the pupil belongs

The constitution of India lays down in Article 28 that 'No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution is maintained wholly out of state funds Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the state but has been established under an endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution' In respect of this the *University Education Commission* observes "The difficulties through which India passed in recent years led to the formulation of these principles The intention is not to ban all religious education but to ban dogmatic or sectarian religious instruction in State Schools If we teach sectarian creeds to our children in public schools, instead of developing in them the spirit of peace and brotherly love, we encourage the spirit of strife as the children become conscious of their divisive creeds and group loyalties"

However, we feel that this prohibition of religious instruction in school wholly maintained out of State funds has virtually led to the withdrawal of moral and spiritual instruction from our educational institutions and consequently a whole generation has come up without any systematic instruction regarding the moral and spiritual values of life

Lack of any provision for moral and spiritual instruction in our educational institutions has led to the growing instances of indiscipline, unrest and lack of idealism among students This has unmistakably weakened the educational institutions to build up character among the student and thereby has defeated the very

purpose of education. Instead of an integrated all round development modern students evince lop sided growth.

The educational system bereft of moral and spiritual values cannot meet the need of fraternal society and cannot establish relation between man and man. "There is definitely a place", says Swami Vimalanandji, 'for spiritual values in education in so far as character is the backbone of all education. If Universities send out physically wrecked socially dumb, spiritually empty, and vocationally misfit personalities our society can never be sound. This can be diminished or prevented by recognising spiritual values in education through graded moral instruction and training. Economic and political rivalries, crooked politics, national suspicion and jingoism thrive where spiritual values are staved off from education'.¹⁰

The *Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction* appointed by the Government of India recommends "As we close we are bound to say that the many ills that world of education and our society as a whole is suffering to day resulting in widespread disturbance and dislocation of life, are mainly due to the gradual disappearance of the hold of the basic principles of religion on the hearts of the people. The old bonds that kept man together are fast loosening and the various new ideologies that are coming to us and which we are outwardly accepting without inwardly digesting their meanings, are increasingly worsening the situation. The only cure, it seems to us, is deliberate inculcation of moral and spiritual values from the earliest years of our lives. The *Indian Universities Commission* of 1902 and the *Calcutta University Commission* 1917-19 have not said anything in favour of religious education. The *Radhakrishnan University Education Commission* 1943-49¹¹, lays great emphasis on the necessity of religious instruction "Religion is not to be identified with a creed to be

10 *Report of the National Seminar on the Spiritual Values in Education* 1963 (Coimbatore Dt. Sri Ramkrishna Mission Vidyalaya 1963) pp. 38-39.

11 *Report of the University Education Commission* (Radhakrishnan Commission Vol. I 1949) pp. 294 to 302.

believed, or an emotion to be felt, or a ceremony to be performed. It is a changed life. We do not judge a man's religion by his intellectual beliefs but by his character and disposition. By their fruits and not by their beliefs do we know them. The said Commission has recommended that there should be 'Universal religion' and asserts that "religion cannot be imparted in the form of lessons. It is not to be treated as one of a number of subjects to be taught in measured hourly doses. Moral and religious instruction does not mean moral improvement. Instruction is not education. What we need is not the imparting of instruction but the transmitting of vitality. We must civilise the human heart. Religion is a permeative influence, a quality of life, an elevation of purpose. Our institutions, if they are to impart religious vitality, should have simplicity and an atmosphere of consecration that permanently influence lives. The Commission recommends :

1. Silent meditation
2. Study of Great Books
3. We must habituate the students to right emotions, induce in them the formation of good moral, mental and physical habits.
4. Great lives of Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, Gandhi should be taught.
5. Study of Religious scriptures
6. Philosophy of Religion. They should be introduced to the problems of philosophy of religion. This is not prohibited by the Constitution. Practising of Dogma is different from this. The intention is not to ban religious education but to ban dogmatic or sectarian education. A common code of great truths in all religions should be taught.

From all these foregoing observations of great thinkers and important Commissions we can definitely and safely deduce the conclusion that there is sufficient relevance and appropriateness

of imparting religious and moral instruction to our students to day as was done by the wise teachers of the *Upaniṣadic* age. What we actually mean to say is that there is relevancy in imbuing the spirit of universal religion i.e. the essence of religion and moral values in the present day society if we earnestly desire that our students should possess integrity of character respect the needs and rights of others and be sensitive to their obligations to society.

If they inculcate the spirit of reverence love sympathy and goodness which are the essentials of all religions they will prove to be useful citizens contributing their mite to the welfare of the society and humanity at large. In our opinion if moral and religious instruction can be introduced in our educational institutions in some form or other we can convert them once again into real temples of learning and peace. Such institutions will be able to turn out students as messengers of learning peace harmony and happiness. Such education obtaining in the *Vedic* age is also met with in the systems of instruction of the Nalanda, Takṣaśīla and other institutions of the other day.

If we read between the lines says Garg the sublime teachings of the *Upaniṣads* and meditate on them they give us an answer to our present problems. They possess enough power to produce from age to age the necessary corrective to men's sense of values and conduct of life by manifesting the spiritual ideal which gives them the vision of reality. The *Upaniṣads* do not belittle the value and significance of our world and life here. They teach us the art of life. They enjoin upon us to remodel the institutions of the world in the light of the *Ātma*. They ask us to realise the *Ātma* and not to be tempted by the allurements of the world. They ask us to set an example to others in society.¹

Let the vision of the *Vedic* seers be realised *samgacchadh vaṇ samvada dhvaṇ sam va manaḥ si ja atam* (*Rg Veda* 10—191). Let us walk in unison together. Let us discuss freely and

¹ R. K. Garg, *The Upaniṣads—the future saviour of mankind* and *Vedanta Kesari* Vol 59 March 1973 p. 553

fairly together. Let us understand rightly the mind of each other by dedication to the cause of social and national peace, harmony and happiness

Let us conclude our study with the prayer

SAHA NĀVAVATU
SAHA NAU BHUNAKTU
SAHA VĪRYAM KARAVĀVAHAI
TEJASVI NĀVADHĪTAM ASTU
MĀ VIDVIṢĀVAHAI

—Kaṭhopanīśad

*May He protect us both ;
May He be pleased with us both ;
With vigour may we work together
May our study make us glorious
May there be no ill-will betwixt us both.*

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Brāhmanas, "with your permission, revered Sirs, I desire to ask him (Yājñavalkya) two questions. If he answers them, none among you will be able to score victory over this philosopher." Thus she asked those two questions like the two arrows coming from the bows of the kings of Kasi and Videha. Yājñavalkya solved both the riddles. On hearing the answers from Yājñavalkya she stopped questioning and said to the *Brāhmanas*, "Revered Sirs, you should consider yourselves fortunate if you can get your release from him through salutations. Never shall any of you be able to vanquish this great philosopher" (B.U., 6-1-8 and 12).

Glāva Maitreya—the son of Mitrā who was also known by the name of *Vaka*, the son of Dalbha. He got these two names for being *Dvāmsuṣyāna* born of two families (one by birth and another by adoption). He is introduced as going out for *Vedic* study in connection with the *Udgītha* of the dogs (C.U., 1-12).

Citra Gārgāyani or Gāngyāyani—He was a well known teacher to whom Śvetaketu and his father Aruna went for higher *Vedic* Study (*Kaustaki*, 1-1).

Caikitāneya Brahmadatta—Brahmadatta, a great grandson of Cikitāna is introduced in the topic that vital force was to be established as no other than the *Udgītha* itself (B.U., 1-3-25).

Jana Śarṅarākṣya—He was one of the five great theologians who under the leadership of Uddālaka Āruni went to Aśvapati, the king of Kekaya for the specialised knowledge of the *Valīśvānara Self* (C.U., 5-11-1).

Janaka Videha—Janaka, the emperor of Videha, was one of the most prominent figures in Hindu religious and philosophical literature and was called a *Rājarsi* or royal sage. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* we find that his court was virtually the centre of *Vedic* culture and civilization. It was, in fact, the resort of the wise and the learned of those days, for receiving and imparting instruction in *Brahmaśāstra*. His discussions with Yājñavalkya, the greatest philosopher of the day amply indicate that he was able to meet the sage on equal terms. Reference has been made to Janaka in B.U. 3-1-1, 4-1-1, 2-1, 4-7;